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Stephen Crane uses man in war to represent universal man in relation to a naturalistic universe. Therefore, an examination of his characters in his war fiction illuminates the author's concept of man's position in the universe.

Crane's most important man in war is Henry Fleming in The Red Badge of Courage. Through Fleming the author indicates a learning process which is a development of both the character and a code of conduct. This code of conduct can be traced throughout Crane's war fiction and is the standard by which his soldier judges himself and his fellows. It consists mainly of courage, self-knowledge, and performance of duty. Adherence to a code leads to the achievement of human dignity--man's only hope in a naturalistic world.

The process of learning is reiterated in "A Mystery of Heroism," which also shows the protagonist adhering to a code. In contrast, Crane portrays man's failure to learn in "Death and the Child."

Crane's picture of the complete soldier portrays man's ability to find personal meaning in a meaningless world. This complete soldier can be seen in "The Clan of No-Name," "The Little Regiment," "The Veteran," "Virtue in War," and "The Price of the Harness."

STEPHEN CRANE'S MAN IN WAR

by

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M.B.F.

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INTRODUCTION

For Stephen Crane war is the metaphor for life in a naturalistic world.[1] The chaos of war represents to him the confusion of an uncaring universe. Therefore, man's reaction to war explains his reaction to life and best exemplifies for the author a concept of man in relation to the universe.

Crane often describes war in terms of games, implying rules that its participants must follow. The game seemingly has no end, for one battle follows on the heels of another. Consequently, the importance lies not in the result, but in the playing. Whether or not man can adhere to the rules of the game determines his success or failure. The rules become for Crane a code of conduct, and man's fate rests in his ability to live according to this code.

War becomes a testing ground for man because it intensifies all of the conditions that man must overcome in his struggle to survive. Fear, fighting, performing

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[1] Edwin H. Cady (Stephen Crane, U.S. Author Series [New York, 1962], p. 79) states that to Crane "the essence of life is war. No one has apparently ever challenged the observation that this was Crane's basic sense of life. The evidence is overwhelming. And, if there be no clear explanation of the origin of his idea, he succeeds so well in finding war in every relation of man to man, to woman, to nature, and to institutions that he leaves his reader convinced."

one's duty, living with one's fellow man, and physical deprivation--all are tensions which test the spirit of man. If he is able to survive these tests, he becomes a real man who can find meaning in his life by facing the uncaring universe with dignity. If he fails the test he becomes like an animal, possessed by fear and futility and facing only a meaningless world.

Thus Crane uses war in his fiction to represent life; he depicts through his characters' reaction to it man's struggle to survive in a naturalistic universe. The purpose of this study is to show through an examination of the protagonists in his war fiction the development and formulation of Crane's concept of man.

It is evident from his stories that Crane's own experience as a correspondent in the Greco-Turkish and Cuban wars influenced his work. He drew many of his characters and situations from life, as a comparison of his war dispatches and short stories shows. Yet the fact that his concept of man in war does not change after he has seen war is indicative of the lack of influence actual combat had on that concept. Whether the author's notions of war's effect on man were right for him from the start or whether his preconceptions simply colored his view of the real thing, the fact remains that aside from a change of emphasis by Crane his portrayal of man's reaction to war does not basically change.

Crane's first protagonists portray the individual in the process of learning to find his place in the universe. This process of learning illustrates the conditions that man must overcome through adherence to a code of conduct. The most important of these protagonists is Henry Fleming of The Red Badge of Courage, and the first chapter deals exclusively with him. He is a study of the tensions within man, and Crane's development of him through the novel is also a development of the code.

The individual's process of learning is exemplified again in Crane's war stories, particularly in "A Mystery of Heroism" and "Death and the Child," the former written before and the latter written after his experience in war. A capsule of the learning process and an explicit statement of the code of conduct appear in a later story, "The Clan of No-Name." These are dealt with in Chapter II.

Chapter III examines Crane's picture of the complete soldier who adheres to the code. These stories exemplify his concept of man educated to the ways of war. "The Little Regiment" and "The Veteran" show Crane's concept before he saw real war, while "Virtue in War" and "The Price of the Harness," both written after the author's experience in battle, indicate that his concept of man in war remains unchanged.

The Red Badge of Courage and the short stories are not the only instances of Crane's writing about war. He

wrote another novel set around war, Active Service, but it is generally considered by critics to be a potboiler and is too superficial to offer anything significant to the study of his man in war. Crane also dealt with man in war in his poetry and, of course, in the war dispatches written when he was a correspondent. However, this study will be restricted to Crane's fiction.

CHAPTER I

HENRY FLEMING'S PROCESS OF LEARNING THROUGH WAR

Asked by a fellow correspondent in the Greco-Turkish War what impressed him most about war, Stephen Crane is reported to have said, "Between two great armies battling against each other the interesting thing is the mental attitude of the men."[1] It is this mental attitude that he deals with in The Red Badge of Courage, thereby placing the emphasis of the novel on the inner turmoil of his protagonist rather than the outer turmoil of the battle. One critic explains Crane's emphasis in this way: "Crane was thus manipulating two levels of meaning: one--more obvious and concrete--concerned the record of the hero's war experiences and the other--more elusive and somewhat submerged--concerned the theme of man's place in the universe."[2] Crane objectifies man's struggle to find his place in the universe through Henry Fleming's reactions to war.

Henry Fleming is a youth who enlists in the Union

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[1] Stephen Crane, The War Dispatches of Stephen Crane, ed. R. W. Stallman and E. R. Hagemann (New York, 1964), p. 43.

[2] O. W. Fryckstedt, "Henry Fleming's Tupenny Fury: Cosmic Pessimism in Stephen Crane's The Red Badge of Courage," Studia Neophilologica, XXXIII (1961), 277.

Army with dreams of battles of Homeric greatness from which he will emerge a hero. He is disappointed when he encounters long and tedious waiting with his regiment for their chance to fight. It is during this waiting period that he begins to wonder whether or not he will be able to pass the test of courage. He realizes that he does not know how he will act under fire, and fears that he will reveal himself a coward rather than prove himself a hero. He vacillates between false, bombastic courage and nervous fear.

This first protagonist is an initial picture of all the traits that man must overcome in order to survive in war. Primarily he is afraid. The thought of fighting and the nearness of death imbue him with a fear which governs his mind and his body. Henry Fleming is not only afraid of death, but he is also afraid that his fear will become known to the other soldiers. As Joseph Conrad so aptly put it in his Introduction to the novel, "He dreads not danger, but fear itself."[3] For if he proves to be a coward in front of the other men, his pride, which is his only sustenance, will be destroyed. Pride makes Fleming want to be a hero, unique among men. Therefore, pride is the basis for his self-deception, which comes from his heroic daydreams, and isolation, which emanates from his

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[3]"His War Book," Last Essays (London, 1926), p. 180.

feeling of uniqueness. Thus Crane interweaves the protagonist's fear, pride, and self-deception and points them all to the isolation of Henry Fleming from his fellow man. It is the hero's struggle to replace his fear with courage, his pride with humility, his self-deception with awareness, and his isolation with brotherhood that determines his process of learning and forms the theme of the novel.

Crane's depiction of Fleming's education can be seen as a microcosmic example of universal man's search for his position in the universe. Critics agree, on the whole, that Crane's view of the universe is primarily a naturalistic one. However, they see his approach to man's position in different ways. The way in which they explain Henry Fleming as a character is indicative of what they feel Crane's basic philosophy to be, since war represents for the author the universe and Fleming represents man in relation to it.

Critics who examine Henry Fleming from a purely naturalistic point of view allow the character no room for growth and learning. They build their case by focusing their attention strictly on the deterministic forces of The Red Badge and the human failures of Fleming. Examples of this naturalistic approach can be found in the analyses of Lars Ahnebrink, C. C. Walcutt, and O. W. Fryckstedt.[4] These

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[4]Lars Ahnebrink, The Beginnings of Naturalism in American Fiction (New York, 1961); C. C. Walcutt, "Stephen Crane:

three critics feel that Fleming is Crane's representation of man's impotence against the forces of an uncaring universe. Ahnebrink and Walcutt deal more closely with Fleming's impotence, while Fryckstedt places his emphasis on what he feels to be Crane's naturalistic pessimism.

Ahnebrink and Walcutt feel that Fleming is governed completely by his instincts and thereby has no control over his actions. In Walcutt's words, the protagonist is an "emotional puppet controlled by whatever sight he sees at the moment."[5] As a result, his seemingly heroic acts are merely the result of man's instinctive struggle for survival in the face of danger. Walcutt expresses Fleming's struggle in terms of a sort of squirrel's cage built by a naturalistic universe and propelled by the youth's emotions. The cage fits into a triangular image with instinct, ideals, and circumstance represented by the angles. Each time Fleming tries to move toward an ideal, circumstance--in the form of a frightening experience--takes over and throws him onto his instincts, which in turn govern his actions. The ideal that Fleming moves toward is to Walcutt an indication of the protagonist's self-deception, for this critic sees no place for ideals in Crane's naturalistic

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Naturalist and Impressionist," American Literary Naturalism, A Divided Stream (Minneapolis, 1956); and O. W. Fryckstedt, "Henry Fleming's Tupenny Fury."

[5]Walcutt, p. 79.

universe. Fleming's ultimate deception, according to both Walcutt and Ahnebrink, is his feeling that he can achieve an heroic ideal and find his position in the universe.

Fryckstedt's reading of The Red Badge finds Crane's universe to be cruel and meaningless, a godless nature which is indifferent to man and yet uses war as a machine for man's destruction. He sees Henry Fleming rebelling against this cruel universe and feels that the futility of his revolt indicates man's inability to find his position in the universe. In Crane's ironic manipulation of the impotent Fleming, Fryckstedt sees the author expressing his own naturalistic pessimism. The protagonist's optimistic review of his situation at the end of the novel--after having raged throughout the book against his position--is clear evidence to the critic that Fleming is a victim of self-deception. Fryckstedt goes on to qualify Crane's method:

> But we must not be deceived by Crane's irony; its aims are complex. While it derides the thoughts of the main character it brings out at the same time the universal pathos of his situation which is the helplessness of the human mind in coping with the problem of man's place in the universe.[6]

The critic bases his opinion primarily on passages from Crane's first manuscript that were later dropped by the author. In the later version Fleming's revolt against the forces of the universe is still clear, although not so

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[6]Fryckstedt, p. 267.

emphatically spelled out by Crane. Moreover, deletions at the end of the book make Fleming's so-called optimism easier to reconcile, for the proportion of humility as opposed to optimistic false pride is greatly increased by Crane's expurgation of ironic statements of Fleming's final thoughts.[7] A study based on the final text tends to negate Fryckstedt's interpretation in favor of a final explanation of Fleming as a man educated by his experiences.

The weakness inherent in the deterministic point of view of the critics mentioned above lies in their failure to take into account the evidence of Henry Fleming's change. An examination of this evidence shows the process of learning which the protagonist undergoes, and this process of learning is the predominant theme in Crane's development of Fleming as a character.

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[7]Note the excuses that the original finds for Fleming: ". . . an excuse and an apology. He said that those tempestuous movements were of the wild mistakes and ravings of a novice who did not comprehend. He had been a mere man raving at a condition, but now he was out of it and could see that it had been very proper and just. It had been necessary for him to swallow swords that he might have a better throat for grapes. Fate had in truth been kind to him; she had stabbed him with benign purpose for his own sake" (Stephen Crane, "The Red Badge of Courage" and Selected Prose and Poetry, ed. William M. Gibson [New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965], p. 372. Reprinted from the first-edition text [New York: Appleton, 1895] with bracketed passages from the text published by The Folio Society of London [1951]).

If these passages were left in the final solution, they would indeed show the pathetic, almost comic, surely disgusting view that one must hold of the hero. However, Fleming's thoughts in the final version show that he has learned shame and humility.

A movement away from the purely deterministic interpretation is offered by such critics as R. W. Stallman, Daniel Hoffman, and Eric Solomon.[8] Stallman feels that Stephen Crane's man can find his position in the universe through change and spiritual growth, and these things he finds to be the key to Fleming's salvation. According to this critic, however, Fleming does not use this key. To Stallman The Red Badge of Courage depicts essentially the self-combat of the protagonist, who fears and resists change. He expresses his theory of Crane's concept of man in this way:

> Only by immersion in the flux of experience does man become disciplined and develop in character, conscience or soul. . . . Henry Fleming recognizes the necessity of change and development, but wars against it. He will not accept the truth that man must lose his soul in order to save it.[9]

Thus Stallman places man within reach of a spiritual ideal, but he sees Fleming rejecting it.[10]

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[8]R. W. Stallman, Stephen Crane: A Biography (New York, 1968); Daniel Hoffman, The Poetry of Stephen Crane (New York, 1956); and Eric Solomon, Stephen Crane: From Parody to Realism (Cambridge, Mass., 1967).

[9]Stallman, pp. 170-171.

[10]This is based on Stallman's latest theory. In his earlier criticism (Stephen Crane: An Omnibus [New York, 1961], pp. 197, 199) Stallman indicates that Fleming does undergo a change: "Spiritual change is Henry Fleming's red badge. His red badge is his conscience reborn and purified. . . . The brave new Henry, 'new bearer of the colors,' triumphs over the former one. The enemy flag is wrenched from the hands of 'the rival color bearer,' the symbol of Henry's own other self, and as this rival

Daniel Hoffman, whose analysis of Crane's concept of man is based primarily on the author's poetry, finds Crane's man isolated and menaced by the forces of a hostile universe which bring him constant suffering. This suffering, according to the critic, "is tolerable only when it is sacrificial, and then it is man's greatest testament to his own humanity."[11] Hoffman feels that the natural state of man for Crane is a state of conflict. Fleming's conflict with himself and his conflict with war and the universe exemplify for Hoffman the author's basic concept of man. The resolution of man's conflict with the universe lies in his ability to determine his place in it. Hoffman feels that resolution for Crane's man lies in the attainment of a spiritual ideal through sacrificing himself to others. It is such self-sacrifice that the critic equates with courage. "That is why," he goes on to say, "Henry Fleming, who thinks he must discover whether he is brave, learns that what he seeks to know is the nature of courage itself."[12] Through this courage man learns a code of conduct, which

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color-bearer dies, Henry is reborn."

The critic later changes his mind (Biography [1968], p. 175) and says: "But this new Henry, who supposedly triumphed over the old is more conscious of himself than ever! Proud Henry still has no red badge of courage. Thinking that he is reborn he is self-deceived and has only a 'salve' for his wounded conscience."

[11]Hoffman, p. 6.

[12]Ibid., p. 172.

Hoffman explicates on his own terms, an explication to be examined more closely later. Concerning Crane's early protagonist, however, Hoffman does not say whether or not Fleming succeeds in ending his conflict and isolation by adhering to the code.

Eric Solomon, who sees Crane's man as an anti-heroic creature, basically good but weak, agrees with Stallman and Hoffman that the only way in which he can survive in an uncaring universe is to lose himself in a common experience with the rest of humanity. Fleming is to him a statement of a paradoxical philosophy on Crane's part because it is only through losing himself to his fellow soldiers that he is able to find himself. Solomon states that the standard for Fleming's development is group loyalty. It is through the realization that he is but an insignificant part of the war that Fleming finds his place in the group. When he is controlled by his delusions of self-importance, he remains isolated and in revolt against the universe. However, Solomon feels that Fleming achieves humility through self-knowledge and then is able to respond to humanity in the persons of those who touch him.[13]

With this interpretation Solomon indicates a definite change in Fleming. In this aspect his criticism is in

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[13]Solomon, pp. 81-92.

contrast to that of Stallman, who maintains that Fleming does not change. With much of Stallman's interpretation --like that of Fryckstedt--based on the deleted passages of the novel, his theory would tend to be less substantial than that of Solomon, who takes into account both manuscripts and still finds evidence for Fleming's process of learning.

Crane's changes in the manuscript indicate to Edwin Cady a change in the author's central theme, thereby moving the emphasis away from the naturalistic view of man. Although Cady feels that a naturalistic interpretation of the universe is part of Crane's philosophy, he sees the author ultimately rejecting it at the end of the novel. Henry Fleming is to him neither a pawn nor a hero, but he does undergo change through the experience of battle. Fleming's change, according to Cady, is a process of learning. From emptiness, vanity, and fear--for Crane, the basic characteristics of man--Cady sees Fleming moving toward sympathy, wisdom, and courage. This emptiness can be equated with isolation, and Fleming replaces it with sympathy for his fellow man. A part of man's vanity is self-deception, and Fleming's knowledge of himself does away with that. Fear is defined by Cady as anything that interferes with courage. Therefore, when Fleming rids himself of isolation and self-deception, he is then able to achieve courage. Thus Cady shows evidence for the theme

of Fleming's process of learning and change.[14]

In the development of his protagonist's learning Crane uses a pattern of repetition and re-emphasis, for each of Fleming's early actions is paralleled later by similar situations.[15] The contrast between his initial responses and his later ones indicates the extent of his change and growth, thus illustrating how much of the process of learning has taken place. The repetition of his interaction with his fellow soldiers and of his experiences in battle provides the most illuminating examples of the change in Fleming.

Interaction between Fleming and the other soldiers serves Crane in two ways. First, it shows the change in his protagonist as he is contrasted with the other characters. Second, it illustrates the theme of brotherhood, which is an integral part of the author's code. The characters that figure predominantly in Fleming's development are Jim Conklin,

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[14]Edwin H. Cady, Stephen Crane, U.S. Author Series (New York, 1962), pp. 115-144.

[15]Thomas M. Lorch deals with this pattern in his article "The Cyclical Structure of The Red Badge of Courage," CLAJ, X (March 1967), 229-238; and Eric Solomon explains a similar effect in "The Structure of The Red Badge of Courage," MFS, V (Autumn 1959), 220-234. Lorch (p. 230) sees a definite cycle in Crane's construction of the novel and relates that cycle to Fleming's character development: "The cycle which Crane establishes reveals why Henry fails, and how he may succeed. He fails whenever he isolates himself, exaggerates his own importance, gives himself over to self-centered thought and imagination, and falls into romantic illusions. He succeeds when he forgets himself, becomes a part of the group, and sees things as they are."

Wilson, the lieutenant, the tattered soldier, and the cheery soldier.[16]

Jim Conklin's early attitude toward danger is in direct contrast to Fleming's. He represents the calm assurance in battle for which the protagonist must strive; thus he is a prototype of Crane's serene veteran of later stories. It is through this soldier that Fleming is able to see the traits which he himself does not have. In the beginning Crane describes Conklin as "busy" in contrast to Fleming as "nervous." Conklin reassures Fleming by admitting the possibility that he himself might run from battle. Yet he accepts this possibility as part of his position in the war. He is motivated by a sense of duty, which is the business of soldiering. He accepts fear just as he accepts everything else about war. Thus he is the opposite of Fleming's fearful questioning about the nature of war and courage. Conklin's acceptance and courage, manifested in his unquestioning fulfillment of what is expected of him as a soldier, is what Fleming must learn.

While Conklin and Fleming are in opposition, Wilson, the loud soldier, is very much like the protagonist at the beginning of the novel. He is initially loud and boastful, and his childishness is a reflection of Fleming's own

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[16]Solomon (p. 82) uses Fleming's relationship with these five men as the basis of his opinion that the fundamental theme of the novel is group loyalty.

weakness. At the same time he serves to illustrate the isolation of the protagonist. When Fleming questions him about his bravery, seeking the same sort of assurance that he found in Conklin's admission, Wilson's pride is injured and he reacts in anger. This leaves Fleming feeling

> . . . alone in space when his injured comrade had disappeared. His failure to discover any mite of resemblance in their viewpoints made him more miserable than before. No one seemed to be wrestling with such a terrific personal problem. He was a mental outcast. (p. 256)[17]

Fleming's first significant encounter with the lieutenant comes as they are moving into battle for the first time. Deeply engrossed in feelings of apprehension and fear, Fleming lags unconsciously behind the others. This causes the lieutenant to beat him with a sword and urge him on. Fleming "hated the lieutenant, who had no appreciation for fine minds. He was a mere brute" (p. 262). His reaction points out both his isolation and his self-deception. In his mind there is a separation between himself and others. In his deception he rationalizes that he is of a higher intelligence than the men around him, whom he considers animals. Therefore, he feels that only he has the capacity to see the truth, that they are all

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[17]All page references to The Red Badge are from "The Red Badge of Courage" and Selected Prose and Poetry, ed. William M. Gibson (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965). Reprinted from the first-edition text (New York: Appleton, 1895) with bracketed passages from the text published by The Folio Society of London (1951).

doomed and are idiots not to flee from "war, the red animal --war, the blood-swollen god" (p. 262). He rationalizes his fear, and this determines his first reaction to the lieutenant. After his learning process he is again pushed by the lieutenant, and his reaction then illustrates the change in him from a fearful, selfish child to a more confident soldier.

Fleming's interaction with the tattered soldier and the cheery soldier comes after the protagonist has been exposed to the experience of battle for the first time. In order to evaluate the meaning that these men have for Fleming, it is first necessary to look at his early reaction to battle.

In his first fight Fleming outwardly loses his selfishness:

> He suddenly lost concern for himself, and forgot to look at a menacing fate. He became not a man but a member. He felt that something of which he was a part--a regiment, an army, a cause, or a country--was in a crisis. He was welded into a common personality which was dominated by a single desire. (p. 271)

The key phrase in Crane's description of Fleming in this battle is "He became not a man but a member." Fleming temporarily loses his selfishness only because he loses his mind, so to speak. As he fights, he loses contact with himself. He becomes a member, the same sort of brute that he earlier felt the lieutenant to be, and his rational side, which has been governed by fear heretofore, is now also

overcome by rage and insensibility.[18] He fights war and death in a blinding panic, "as a babe being smothered attacks the deadly blankets" (p. 273), rather than fighting the enemy as a soldier must do.

After the first skirmish is over and Fleming finds that he has survived, he still feels himself to be unique and special. "He went into an ecstasy of self-satisfaction. He had the most delightful sensations of his life. Standing as if apart from himself, he viewed that last scene. He perceived that the man who fought thus was magnificent" (p. 276). Thus the result of his first battle is that Fleming is still deluded and self-centered, having learned nothing from his experience.

As a result, he is overcome by the surprise of an immediate second attack. Having relaxed his tensions on the fleeting sense of security which is born of the false vision of himself, he is ill-prepared to face another test of courage so soon. He runs away. Thus he completes the first of several desertions. The rationalization of his first flight augments Fleming's sense of isolation and pride, especially after he finds that his comrades have held their position against the enemy. He thinks of them as fools, and yet they survive, whereas he, "the enlightened

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[18] W. B. Dillingham ("Insensibility in The Red Badge of Courage," CE, XXV [Dec. 1963], 194-198) takes this insensibility as Crane's criterion for man's heroism in war.

man who looks afar in the dark, had fled because of his superior perceptions and knowledge" (p. 283). He feels betrayed by his false knowledge of the universe which dictates that man succeeds through rational behavior. He feels that it was rational for him to run from danger, and yet those who did not run have succeeded while he now appears to be a coward. According to Eric Solomon, "The beginning of wisdom comes with the comprehension that his judgment is insufficient."[19] Thus, Crane uses this paradox of Fleming's perception of his own reasoning power to illustrate the first stages of his learning process.

Seeing his self-deception for the first fime, Fleming turns to nature for solace. "He went from the fields into a thick wood, as if resolved to bury himself" (p. 284). His resolution to bury himself in nature indicates his desire to give up the struggle of life.[20] However, he finds not a symbolic and peaceful death but real and horrible death in the form of a decaying corpse. Consequently, it becomes clear to Fleming that nature and the universe will not

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[19]Solomon, Parody to Realism, p. 86.

[20]John Hart ("The Red Badge of Courage as Myth and Symbol," UKCR, XIX [Summer 1953], 249-256) feels that the symbolic burial of Fleming in the tomb of woods imbues him with an unconscious awareness of the nature of death. This awareness then restores him with the energy and strength of life and allows him to overcome his fear. All of this the critic bases on the assumption that Crane's theme follows that of the traditional myth--man must die in order to live.

take care of him and that he must depend on his own action for survival. Yet he has already found that he cannot succeed through his own reasoning power. Therefore, he is thoroughly confused at this point, and it is during his confusion that he once again encounters Jim Conklin.

The interaction between Conklin and Fleming after the first battle emphasizes the hero's inner struggle and confusion. Conklin is one of many wounded men streaming from the battlefield. Fleming envies the men, thinking their wounds are signs of their courage. When he is confronted by the horror of Conklin's wound, he sees the folly of yet another self-deception--the idea that a wound, "a red badge," would hide his cowardice. He tries to help his friend. "He strove to express his loyalty, but he could only make fantastic gestures" (p. 294). He fails in his attempt, just as he has failed in battle, because he does not know what to do. His impotence is again made clear to him by Conklin's death,[21] and again Fleming reacts with rage. He turns his rage against the battlefield, and in the author's terms he symbolizes man's raging against the

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[21]Stallman (Biography, p. 175) thinks that Conklin represents Christ and that by his death through the literal red badge of his wound he is opening the door to Fleming's salvation, which the latter blasphemes in his curse against the battle--"the Army of the Lord."

In the same vein as Stallman, Fryckstedt sees in Conklin's death an insane religion showing nature's cruel meaninglessness to poor Fleming. In the youth's reaction to it the critic finds reflected the horror of a godless world.

universe.[22] The universe remains unmoved.[23]

On the heels of Fleming's failure to help Jim Conklin comes his interaction with the tattered man. Fearing that this soldier also is about to die, Fleming runs away and leaves him. He cannot face up to death again so soon, nor can he face up to the shame that the tattered man brings out in him. Fleming repeats more intensely his earlier desertion of his fellow soldiers in battle. His encounter with the tattered soldier reveals in several ways how much he has yet to learn. First of all, the tattered man has the selflessness which Fleming does not have, for the man thinks only of the youth although he himself is mortally wounded. Second, he assumes Fleming is wounded and questions him as to the nature and location of the wound, thereby stirring up the latter's conscience and unknowingly probing into his inner struggle. Crane writes:

> The simple questions of the tattered man had been knife thrusts to him. They asserted a society that probes pitilessly at secrets until all is apparent. His late companion's chance persistence made him feel that he could not keep his crime

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[22] Both Stallman and Fryckstedt emphasize this point in their analyses of Fleming's relationship to the universe.

[23] In one of his most frequently quoted poems, Crane further exemplifies man's failure to move the universe and the futility of his efforts:

> A man said to the universe:
> "Sir, I exist!"
> "However," replied the universe,
> "The fact has not created in me
> A sense of obligation."
> (As quoted in Hoffman, p. 93)

> concealed in his bosom. It was sure to be brought plain by one of those arrows which cloud the air and are constantly pricking, discovering, proclaiming those things which are willed to be forever hidden. He admitted that he could not defend himself against this agency. It was not within the power of vigilance. (p. 301)

Finally, as Fleming leaves him, the tattered man asks the symbolic question, "Where yeh goin'?" This simple question represents the meaning of Henry Fleming as a character, for it is his struggle to find out where he is going in relation to the universe that makes up The Red Badge.

At this point in the novel the author turns fully to the confusion which overwhelms Fleming. The hero's mind becomes a whirlpool. Shame and pride, cowardice and courage --all oscillate within him as he attempts to rationalize his situation. While Fleming is embroiled in confusion, he receives a wound on the head.[24] This wound is ironic in two ways. The explicit irony of the blow is that it is delivered by one of Fleming's fellow soldiers rather than by the enemy. The implicit irony lies in the location of the wound, for the blow comes while Fleming is using his head, or his reason, so intensely to try to figure out his situation. Thus, the author indicates ironically the

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[24]Bernard Weisberger ("The Red Badge of Courage," Twelve Original Essays on Great American Novels, ed. Charles Shapiro [Detroit, 1958], p. 104) finds Fleming's wound to be symbolically self-inflicted. He feels that Fleming comes into contact with his own image in the fleeing soldier who hits him. Thus he is forced to see himself and thereby to undergo a part of his redemption through self-knowledge.

futility of the hero's reasoning ability.[25]

In his wounded state Fleming reiterates Crane's infantile image of him in the panic of battle. After being knocked down, "he got upon his hands and knees, and from thence, like a babe, trying to walk, to his feet" (p. 309). In his childlike attitude he meets the cheery soldier, who leads him back to where his regiment has regrouped after the battle. The cheery soldier exists in the novel for the sole purpose of aiding Fleming. He is anonymous as a character, and this anonymity emphasizes his representation of the selflessness of brotherhood. As he leads Fleming, he accomplishes his task of finding the regiment quickly and efficiently. He knows what he is doing and does it with confidence. His calm, businesslike attitude is the antithesis of Fleming's confusion and indecision. Thus, the cheery soldier is contrasted in two ways with the protagonist, showing the latter's need for selflessness and also his need for calm acceptance of his situation.

When Fleming returns to his regiment, he encounters Wilson again. The loud soldier has learned from his battle experience and has passed his test of courage:

> The youth took note of a remarkable change in his comrade since those days of camp life upon the river bank. He seemed no more to be continually

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[25]Dillingham, p. 195.

> regarding the proportions of his personal prowess. He was not furious at small words that pricked his conceits. He was no more a loud young soldier. There was about him now a fine reliance. He showed a quiet belief in his purposes and his abilities. (p. 321)

Rather than mirroring Fleming's fear, Wilson is now in direct contrast to the protagonist. The difference between them is accentuated by Fleming's reiteration of self-deception and pride in perhaps Crane's most ironic statement of the novel:

> He remembered how some of the men had run from the battle. As he recalled their terror-struck faces, he felt a scorn for them. They had surely been more fleet and more wild than was absolutely necessary. They were weak mortals. As for himself, he had fled with discretion and dignity. (p. 327; italics mine)

How different he is from Wilson, who "could perceive himself as a very wee thing" (p. 321)!

As the men prepare again for battle, Fleming is in essense the same raw recruit that he was on the previous day because he has failed to learn anything from his experiences. He rages against the commanding officers, complains about the orders, and wants to know the reason for the soldiers' being where they are. He is the opposite of Crane's ideal soldier who accepts his duty uncomplainingly and unquestioningly and who respects his leaders. Fleming is still motivated by fear, for his outbursts occur mainly when danger, in the presence of the enemy, is made known to him. Yet again, just as in the beginning of the novel,

his greater fear lies in being discovered a coward. He feels threatened by his hidden guilt, afraid that his desertion of the battle and the tattered man and the nature of his "wound" will become known to his fellow soldiers.

As he enters battle for the second time, Fleming exhibits the same characteristics which he possessed in the first fight; however, he is now more intense in these traits. His isolation is heightened as his fear becomes overwhelmed by hate. "When, in a dream, it occurred to the youth that his rifle was an impotent stick, he lost sense of everything but his hate, his desire to smash into pulp the glittering smile of victory which he could feel upon the faces of his enemies" (p. 335). They are "his enemies" and his is an individual fight, not yet a part of the battle as a whole. "Once he, in his intense hate, was almost alone, and was firing when all those near him had ceased" (p. 336). Again he moves trance-like through the physical act of fighting, but this time his senseless fury leads him to pursue the enemy rather than to run from them. His evaluation of his action shows that although physically he has proved himself, intellectually and spiritually he is still in the process of learning:

> These incidents made the youth ponder. It was revealed to him that he had been a barbarian, a beast. He had fought like a pagan who defends his religion. Regarding it, he saw that it was fine, wild, and in some ways, easy. He had been a tremendous figure, no doubt. By this struggle he had overcome obstacles which he had admitted

> to be mountains. They had fallen like paper peaks, and he was now what he called a hero. And he had not been aware of the process. He had slept and, awakening, found himself a knight. (p. 337)

Fleming's delusions of being a hero are quickly shattered when he and Wilson overhear their commanding officers refer to their division as "mule drivers." This sharp encounter with reality on the heels of his romantic delusions hastens Fleming's learning. "New eyes were given to him. And the most startling thing was to learn suddenly that he was very insignificant" (p. 341).[26] It is in Fleming's realization of his own insignificance that the key to his development lies. For his delusions of self-importance and his desire to accomplish heroic acts are the basis of his self-deception throughout the novel. With the ending of Fleming's self-deception comes his ability to learn. His knowledge is illustrated by Crane's describing the battle through his eyes. "It seemed to the youth that he saw everything" (p. 344). His vision is now clear, whereas in the earlier battle it was trancelike and distorted.[27]

Even though Fleming is able to see his position more

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[26]Max Westbrook ("Stephen Crane and the Personal Universe," MFS, VIII [Winter 1962-1963], 351-360) deals with Fleming's eyes being opened to reality through the general's remark.

[27]An example of the distortion of Fleming's earlier view is Crane's use of the battery that the hero sees out of proportion to his surroundings, thus making them seem to be "tiny riders . . . beating tiny horses" (p. 275).

clearly, he is still "in doubt and awe" of the danger ahead of him as he returns to battle. For this reason the lieutenant has to prod him once more, and "the private felt a sudden unspeakable indignation against his officer. He wrenched fiercely and shook him off" (p. 347). This would indicate that symbolically he shakes off the implied accusation by the lieutenant that he (Fleming) is afraid to go into battle. The lieutenant represents to Fleming the judgment of his fellow man. His approval represents success; his disapproval represents failure.[28] Naturally Fleming prefers success, and he realizes that the way to attain it is by showing himself courageous in front of his fellow soldiers and winning their approval.

In order to prove his courage Fleming throws himself into the test of battle.

> Within him, as he hurled himself forward, was born a love, a despairing fondness for this flag which was near him. It was a creation of beauty and invulnerability. . . . Because no harm could come to it he endowed it with power. He kept near, as if it could be a saver of lives . . . . (p. 348)

Fleming takes the flag when the color bearer is killed, and it becomes a talisman against his fear of death.[29] Although

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[28]Solomon, Parody to Realism, p. 82.

[29]In his myth theory Hart equates the flag to the goddess that Fleming must save in order to be an heroic knight in the battle. He is unable to do this until after he has overcome the dragon--death.

Stallman sees the flag representing Fleming's conscience. He says, "The flag registers the commotion of his mind, and

he was willing to go into battle after the lieutenant prodded him, his actions were still visibly fearful. "The youth ran like a madman to reach the woods before a bullet could discover him. He ducked his head low, like a football player. In his haste his eyes almost closed, and the scene was a wild blur" (p. 348). (His fear seems to cloud his newfound vision.) Endowed with the power of the flag, however, he is now able to face with courage the danger of death.

> The youth walked stolidly into the midst of the mob [the almost hysterical soldiers], and with his flag in his hands took a stand as if he expected an attempt to push him to the ground. He unconsciously assumed the attitude of the color bearer in the fight of the preceding day. (p. 351)

Crane goes on to describe Fleming's fear, but shows him standing firm in spite of it.

The flag represents the whole regiment, for it is the emblem which ties them together as a fighting unit. In representing the group, therefore, it becomes a symbol of battle brotherhood, "the mysterious fraternity" (p. 272) of soldiers. Fleming's devotion to the flag and his use of it to encourage the men indicate his movement toward the group. He thus begins to lose his self-centeredness and to become a part of the regiment.

This movement toward the group can be seen by Fleming's

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it registers the restless movements of the nervous regiment . . . . Henry dishonors the flag not when he flees battle but when he flees from himself, and he redeems the flag when he redeems his conscience" (Biography, pp. 174-175).

observations of the other soldiers. He sees in them a reflection of all that he has been through[30] and begins to feel closely akin to them. They exhibit fear at first. After winning a skirmish, however, they are elated, just as Fleming was after his initial battle. "The impetus of enthusiasm was theirs again. They gazed about them with looks of uplifted pride, feeling new trust in the grim, always confident weapon in their hands. And they were men" (p. 354). When they are chastised by the general for the insignificance of their win, they become just as indignant as Fleming was when the lieutenant prodded him:

> The news that the regiment had been reproached went along the line. For a time the men were bewildered by it. . . . Presently, however, they began to believe that in truth their efforts had been called light. The youth could see this conviction weigh upon the entire regiment until the men were like cuffed and cursed animals, but withal rebellious. (p. 357)

As they move back into battle, the men fight like veterans. They become determined, just as Fleming is, to prove that they are not cowards.

In a new encounter with the enemy, the regiment holds its position bravely. "Perhaps at this new assault the men recalled the fact that they had been named mud diggers, and it made their situation thrice bitter" (p. 363). At the same time, Fleming expresses the sentiments of the group

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[30]Solomon, Parody to Realism, p. 94.

more emphatically:

> The youth had resolved not to budge whatever should happen. Some arrows of scorn that had buried themselves in his heart had generated strange and unspeakable hatred. It was clear to him that his final and absolute revenge was to be achieved by his dead body lying, torn and glittering, upon the field. This was to be a poignant retaliation upon the officer who had said "mule drivers," and later "mud diggers," for in all the wild graspings of his mind for a unit responsible for his sufferings and commotions he always seized upon the man who had dubbed him wrongly. And it was his idea, vaguely formulated, that his corpse would be for those eyes a great and salt reproach. (pp. 363-364)

Thus Fleming's thoughts epitomize the pride of the soldiers and at the same time indicate that he is truly a part of the group. The insults that disturb him most now are those which include the whole regiment--"mule drivers" and "mud diggers"--rather than the prodding of the lieutenant, which was directed at him as an individual.

The final proof of courage for Fleming and the rest of the regiment comes when they are called upon to charge the enemy. With Fleming's new eyes, "he saw that to be firm soldiers they must go forward" (p. 365). Moving forward is their only salvation from both death and the derision of their fellow soldiers who will judge them. In this charge Fleming leads the men:

> The youth kept the bright colors to the front. He was waving his free arm in furious circles, the while shrieking mad calls and appeals, urging on those that did not need to be urged, for it seemed that the mob of blue men hurling themselves on the dangerous group of rifles were again suddenly wild with an enthusiasm of unselfishness. (p. 365)

At this point, when Fleming is both a leader and a part of the group,

> He was capable of profound sacrifices, a tremendous death. He had no time for dissections, but he knew that he thought of the bullets only as things that could prevent him from reaching the place of his endeavor. There were subtle flashings of joy within him that thus should be his mind. (p. 366)

In Crane's pattern of repetition the novel ends with the protagonist's thoughts vacillating in much the same way as they had in the beginning.[31] Fleming is able to "more closely comprehend himself and circumstance" (p. 371) because of his experience in battle, and what he comprehends seems to change him from one position to another very quickly. First, "he felt gleeful and unregretting," for "his public deeds were paraded in great and shining prominence" (p. 371) in his mind. "He saw that he was good. He recalled with a thrill of joy the respectful comments of his fellows upon his conduct" (p. 372). (And, after all, it is the respect of his comrades that represents success.) He suffers second thoughts, however, when he remembers his "flight from the first engagement" and his desertion of the tattered soldier. As a result, "the light of his soul flickered with shame. . . . A specter of reproach came to him" (p. 372) in the memory of his desertions, and his greatest fear is "that he might

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[31] Stallman (Biography, p. 175) sees in Fleming's vacillating thoughts a return to the self-centeredness of the beginning of the novel.

be detected in the thing" (p. 373). His thoughts therefore combine genuine shame for what he has done and fear that the respect he has earned from his comrades will be lost.

These thoughts are soon replaced by others, for "gradually he mustered force to put the sin at a distance" (p. 374). After putting his sin at a distance, Fleming is able to reflect ultimately on the change that has occurred in him. "And at last his eyes could look upon the brass and bombast of his earlier gospels and see them truly" (p. 374). He is once again "gleeful" as he sees how much he has learned about himself.

That Henry Fleming has achieved knowledge of himself in relation to the war and the universe is the main point of Crane's ending to The Red Badge. Fleming's new vision of himself, without the "brass and bombast," is balanced between his old delusions of romantic heroism and his fear of detection of his sin of desertion.[32] The shame of the latter blocks his return to the former.[33] This new vision is proof that Fleming has indeed changed. In summing up Fleming's learning, Eric Solomon observes: "At least war has shown the young soldier his true self, and the acquisition of self-knowledge is no small accomplishment. . . . He has become a new man who views life in a fresh framework, not

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[32]Cady, p. 142.

[33]Solomon, Parody to Realism, p. 89.

as an opportunity for glory but as a job to be done."[34] His view of life reflects his knowledge of himself in relation to war. He has learned that in order to survive he must function as a part of the regiment. Fleming's individual pride is thus transformed by his learning process into pride in his regiment, and his desire to prove himself courageous becomes the soldier's desire to perform his duty well.

The summation of Fleming's learning is expressed in his thoughts. "He had been to touch the great death, and found that, after all, it was but the great death. He was a man" (p. 375). His new attitude toward death is the result of his total learning process. The "great death," that "menacing fate" which Fleming could not look at in his first battle, is all that Crane's man can expect from the universe; therefore, man must be willing to accept it in order to know his position in the universe. The acceptance of death becomes a soldier's duty. To accept death with dignity, thus performing one's duty well, is the heroism of Crane's code of conduct. The willingness to accept death takes courage, and Fleming has shown that he has courage through his test of battle. Accordingly, Fleming's achievement is expressed by the author with "He was a man." In contrast to his earlier description, "He became not a man

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[34]Ibid., p. 97.

but a member" (p. 271), this closing statement indicates the change in Henry Fleming.

The change in Fleming is the completion of his process of learning. He has learned humility to replace his self-deceiving pride. He has learned to sacrifice himself for others, which replaces his self-centeredness. Most important, he has learned that there are certain rules of war which he must live by in order to survive. These rules are based on self-knowledge and group loyalty, and it is the duty of the complete soldier to adhere to them.

CHAPTER II

MORE LEARNING AND A CODE OF CONDUCT

Stephen Crane's early short stories about war continue to deal with the individual's process of learning what his position is in war and the universe. The education of Henry Fleming is reflected in the education of these later protagonists. At the same time Crane reinforces his picture of the complete soldier.

Man's struggle to learn the rules of war is again dealt with in "A Mystery of Heroism." This is the story of Fred Collins of A Company, whose thirst in the midst of battle leads him into a situation which tests his courage. Complaining of his need for water, he is taunted by his fellow soldiers into making a foolhardy attempt to get some from a well which stands in the middle of the battle action. When he finds himself actually doing this deed, he is as amazed at himself as the other soldiers are at him--and quite fearful. However, he is tenacious in spite of his amazement and fear, and this tenacity in a dangerous situation is the measure of both his motivation and his courage.

In his discussion of Crane's hero, George W. Johnson calls Collins' experience that of "the typical Crane protagonist, the internal struggle of a solitary man caught

between two incongruous conceptual modes."[1] The incongruity of his situation lies in the disparity between the danger of his act and its lack of significance. The water is not really necessary, for the men are not dying of thirst. Yet it becomes to Collins a goal which he must achieve in order to prove himself to his fellow man. Thus an outwardly meaningless act becomes a test which Collins sets up for himself to prove that he is a man.

Collins' motivation and his reaction to his situation determine his character. As the protagonist sets out on his errand, Crane's portrayal of his feelings indicates that his motivation is a combination of pride and shame:[2]

> When Collins faced the meadow and walked away from the regiment, he was vaguely conscious that a chasm, the deep valley of all prides, was suddenly between him and his comrades. It was provisional, but the provision was that he return a victor. He had blindly been led by quaint emotions, and laid himself under an obligation to walk squarely up to the face of death. (p. 223)[3]

His pride is what motivates him to start out on the mission. Once he is on his way, the shame of not completing his task keeps him going.

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[1]"Stephen Crane's Metaphor of Decorum," PMLA, LXXVIII (June 1963), 256.

[2]Eric Solomon, Stephen Crane: From Parody to Realism (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), p. 104.

[3]All quotations from the short stories are from The Complete Short Stories and Sketches of Stephen Crane, ed. Thomas A. Gullason (New York, 1963).

Collins' motivation is the same as Fleming's when the latter makes his final move into battle. Just as Fleming is prodded by his lieutenant, so is Collins prodded by his comrades. The goal of each man is insignificant in relation to the war as a whole, and yet it becomes a test that each protagonist must pass. The obstacles to their goals are fear and the circumstances of an uncaring universe. The rewards for their achievement are self-esteem and admiration from their fellows.

Crane uses a pattern of contrasts in this story to show the insignificance of Collins in a naturalistic universe. Each time that Collins' thirst is mentioned, it is contrasted immediately to the violence and magnitude of the battle. The protagonist is introduced wishing for a drink of water. As he speaks, the bugler is killed by "the crimson terror of an exploding shell" (p. 219). The next instance of Collins' expressing his desire for water comes immediately following the description of a wounded lieutenant. As the men begin to respond with humor to Collins' third complaint of thirst, Crane injects a scene of "relentless and hideous carnage" (p. 221) in the description of the death of battery horses. Again the lieutenant's wounded condition is described as Collins' complaints bring jeers from his fellow soldiers and the protagonist answers these jeers by stating his intention to get water. Thus, as a result of Crane's contrasts, the

protagonist's thirst is shown to be relatively meaningless.

Collins' behavior as he performs his task is a reproduction of Henry Fleming's. He is initially deceived by his delusions of self-importance into believing that he will accomplish an heroic act by getting the water. Here he resembles the early Fleming in feeling that his destiny is heroic and that he is capable of controlling it. He is a victim of self-deception as a result. Thus he fits with Henry Fleming into the picture that many critics have of Crane's hero. According to Stallman, the character "creates a flattering image of himself and of the world, whereas in the narrator's ironic viewpoint man is insignificant . . . ."[4] In view of this, Collins presents a somewhat pathetic figure as he moves out into the exploding shells toward the well. He is a man blundering into a trap of his own making.[5]

Just as Fleming moves in a trance through his first battle, so Collins is dazed as he approaches danger. As Crane describes him:

> . . . he had no full appreciation of anything, excepting that he was actually conscious of being dazed. He could feel his dulled mind groping after the form and color of this incident. He wondered at this, because human expression had

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[4]R. W. Stallman, Stephen Crane: A Biography (New York, 1968), p. 41.

[5]Maxwell Geismar, "Stephen Crane: Halfway House," Rebels and Ancestors: The American Novel, 1890-1915 (Boston, 1953), p. 91.

> said loudly for centuries that men who did not feel this fear were phenomena--heroes.
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> He was, then, a hero. He suffered that disappointment which we would all have if we discovered that we were ourselves capable of those deeds which we most admire in history and legend. This, then, was a hero. After all, heroes were not much. (p. 223)

In his dazed and fearless state Collins exhibits his preconceived romantic ideas about the nature of heroism. These ideas are based not on Collins' own experience but on the romantic delusion that lack of fear is indicative of courage. Therefore, they are unrealistic and the protagonist's self-deception is inherent in them.

In his own mind Collins does not morally measure up to these ideas. He thinks:

> No, it could not be true. He was not a hero. Heroes had no shames in their lives, and, as for him, he remembered borrowing fifteen dollars from a friend and promising to pay it back the next day, and then avoiding that friend for ten months. When, at home, his mother had aroused him for the early labor of his life on the farm, it had often been his fashion to be irritable, childish, diabolical; and his mother had died since he had come to the war. (p. 223)

Collins' belief that these very human qualities keep him from being heroic also indicates his unrealistic concept of heroism. To him a man must be above all ordinary human traits in order to be heroic in war. Consequently, Collins is like the early Fleming in his unlearned, romantic image of the nature of heroism.

The protagonist loses his delusions through experience, as does Fleming. Collins' eyes are opened as he nears

his goal--"each detail of the scene became vivid to him" (p. 224)--and, like Fleming, he becomes a spectator of war. The reality of his fear hits him as he reaches the well. "And now, he was suddenly smitten with the terror. It came upon his heart like the grasp of claws. All the power faded from his muscles. For an instant he was no more than a dead man" (p. 224). Symbolically, Collins' inexperienced self dies here, and with it his self-deception about the nature of heroism. As he recovers his physical strength and begins to fill the canteens, he is a more realistic man. He realizes that he is afraid, and yet he knows that he must fulfill his mission.

Like Fleming, Collins rages at his impotence, which is in his case the inability to fill the canteens quickly. He fills the well bucket instead, and while he is running back to his regiment with it, his insignificance is depicted once more in contrast to the horror of war: "Through this terrible field over which screamed practical angels of death, Collins ran in the manner of a farmer chased out of a dairy by a bull" (p. 225). In running back, Collins nears the mortally wounded lieutenant, who calls out for some of his water. At first he runs on, screaming "I can't!"--just as Fleming deserts the tattered man--but then Collins turns back to give the man water. Collins' hands shake so badly from fear that in his attempt to give the officer the water he merely succeeds in splashing it

on the face of the dying man. The result of his act of giving water to the man is outwardly meaningless because the water does not help him. The importance, however, lies in the fact that Collins is willing to go back and face death for a fellow man although his fear urges him to run back to the regiment. In so doing, the protagonist reflects Fleming's willingness to face death when he carries the flag, the symbol of brotherhood.

Just as the result of Collins' giving water to the officer is outwardly meaningless, so is the result of his obtaining the water. When he gives the bucket to the men, two childish lieutenants accidentally drop it to the ground in their playfulness. Thus the precious water--the prize that Collins strives for--is wasted. The water has been compared to the symbol of life draining away on the wasteland of war,[6] and indeed it does seem to indicate a hopelessness just that severe. At the same time, the two lieutenants' indifference and the empty bucket are symbols of the emptiness of Collins' preconceived notions of the nature of heroism.[7] The result of Collins' deed points out Crane's concept that the success or failure of man lies not in what he ultimately achieves but in how he goes about achieving it. In other words, it is how he plays the game--war--that

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[6]Solomon, p. 105.

[7]Stallman, p. 335.

counts.

As a representative of Crane's man in war, Collins re-emphasizes the learning of Henry Fleming. In the short time covered by the story, Crane sends Collins through the purge of battle fire in lieu of the longer process of learning that Fleming undergoes. Collins' education consists of losing his self-deception and of passing his test of courage. Both he and Fleming start out by thinking only of themselves and emerge at the end in acts which indicate a willingness to forget themselves and to face death.

"Death and the Child," which Crane wrote after experiencing battle in the Greco-Turkish War, continues the author's theme of what man must learn in order to survive in war and the universe.[8] R. F. Gleckner, in his analysis of the story, calls it Crane's "finest symbolic portrayal" of the antagonism between man and the universe.[9] Although Crane had by now seen war for himself, his concept of battle remains unchanged in this story. At the same time the protagonist reiterates and intensifies Crane's concept of man in war.

The plot of "Death and the Child" is overtly simple.

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[8]This is felt to be Crane's finest war story by many critics, including Solomon, Stallman, Thomas Gullason, and John Schroeder.

[9]"Stephen Crane and the Wonder of Man's Conceit," MFS, V (Autumn 1959), 272.

The first part of the story deals with a correspondent to the Greco-Turkish War, Peza, whose experience in life has not prepared him for the reality of war. He is a study of self-deception, which takes the form first of idealism and then of the same pride and fear that motivate Crane's earlier protagonists. Peza is innocent of any knowledge concerning the reality of life as expressed by war. His innocence is due to the small scope of his personal experience. Peza's idealism is meaningless in relation to the reality of war, for his values and rules are left over from the superficial, unrealistic student society. He lives his life according to a code, but it is a code of manners and is useless for him when he comes into contact with war. He is as innocent of knowledge of reality as Henry Fleming and Collins are before their experiences in battle.

The author uses interaction between his protagonist and other characters to define the former, as he does in The Red Badge. The correspondent is first contrasted with a throng of peasants fleeing down a mountain away from battle. Seen in relation to these panic-stricken people, Peza is "eager, passionate, profoundly moved, his first words while facing the procession of fugitives had been an active definition of his own dimension, his personal relation to men, geography, life. Throughout he had preserved the fiery dignity of a tragedian" (p. 393). Everything that Peza sees he defines in terms of himself, thus showing his

self-centeredness. His self-deception is also indicated here by his idealistic delusions of a romantic picture of himself. Even though Peza is not Greek, he immediately asks to be a part of the army so that he can fulfill this romantic picture of himself. The incongruity of him as an Italian fighting for the Greek army indicates the falseness surrounding his whole situation.

Peza is next contrasted with a lieutenant who shows him the way toward battle. "The officer was also a young man, but he was bronzed and steady. Above his high military collar of crimson cloth with one silver star upon it appeared a profile, stern, quiet, and confident, respecting fate, fearing only opinion" (p. 394). As Peza follows the officer closer to battle, they encounter some wounded men.[10] Because of his inexperience the correspondent feels shock and pity at the sight of them, in contrast to the lieutenant's hardened attitude. The difference that Peza sees between

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[10]Crane apparently took these wounded men from his own experience at the Battle of Velestino, the only action he saw in the Greco-Turkish War. In a war dispatch to the London Westminster Gazette, June, 1897, he describes a wounded soldier who possesses calm dignity although he has been shot in the head: "Behind him was the noise of the battle, the roar and rumble of an enormous factory. This was the product, not so well finished as some, but sufficient to express the plan of the machine. This wounded soldier explained the distant roar. He defined it" (The War Dispatches of Stephen Crane, ed. R. W. Stallman and E. R. Hagemann [New York, 1964], p. 62).

What his protagonists are able to comprehend from wounded men returning from battle is a predominant theme in Crane's war fiction.

his innocence and the officer's experience begins to open his eyes. He sees evidence of his own insignificance in the huge "theater for slaughter [war], . . . he reflected that the accidental destruction of an individual, Peza by name, would perhaps be nothing at all" (p. 396). Consequently, he begins to see the insignificance of his earlier enthusiasm for the Greek cause. His idealism is being broken down by reality. Crane reinforces this situation as Peza begins to think of the battle in terms of machinery:

> Curiously enough, too, this first shell smacked of the foundry--of men with smudged faces, of the blare of furnace fires. It brought machinery immediately to his mind. He thought that if he was killed here at this time, it would be as romantic to the old standards as death by a bit of falling iron in a factory. (p. 397)

Instead of learning from this discovery, however, he is only thrown deeper into his fear and self-deception.

At this point the story shifts to Crane's depiction of an innocent child left alone on the top of the mountain by his fleeing parents. He is tranquil and unconcerned, in contrast to Peza's intense excitement below; and he is solitary, which parallels Peza's mental separation from his newfound circumstances. At the same time, his innocence is an ironic statement of Peza's innocence of reality. As the child hears the noises of battle, his attention is drawn to the action which he sees in miniature below the mountain top. He begins to imitate the actions

of battle in his play. Here Crane equates war to a game.[11]

As the story returns to Peza, he sees more of war, thereby becoming more experienced and losing some of his innocence. With the loss of innocence comes a diminishing of his false idealism. His experience does not, however, bring humility as it does to Crane's earlier characters. His selfishness is brought out clearly in the fading light of his idealism. "Peza no longer was torn with sorrow at the sight of wounded men. Evidently he found that pity had a numerical limit . . . ." (p. 399) His only concern is still for himself and his chances for survival.

Peza is unable to accept the situation in which he finds himself--the situation of wounded men, death, and fear--because his background does not give him the strength to accept reality. When the lieutenant leaves him for other duties, Peza seeks solace for his fear and an explanation of his situation from passing soldiers. "They knew nothing, save that war was hard work. If they talked at all, it was in testimony of having fought well, savagely" (p. 400). In contrast to the protagonist, these soldiers show those characteristics which cause them to be veterans and lead to their survival in the chaos of war. Part of Peza's

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[11]In another war dispatch (as quoted in Stallman, p. 287) Crane expresses this aspect of war as he describes a battlefield from afar: "From a distance it was like a game. No blood, no expressions of horror were to be seen; there were simply the movements of tiny doll tragedy."

failure lies in his wanting answers from war rather than accepting his position unquestioningly.

Peza also fails when he is given the opportunity to help a wounded man. He is confronted with a soldier being helped down the mountain by two of his comrades. The man's jaw has been shot away, and the horror of his wound terrifies Peza. The wounded man stares at Peza with "a mystic gaze, which Peza withstood with difficulty" (p. 403). Thus Crane implies a relationship between this wounded man and Peza which the latter either cannot or will not grasp. The author goes on to indicate Peza's failure to help his fellow man:

> As Peza went on, one of the unwounded soldiers shouted to him to return and assist in this tragic march. But even Peza's fingers revolted. He was afraid of the specter; he would not have dared to touch it. He was surely craven in the movement of refusal he made to them. He scrambled hastily on up the path. He was running away! (p. 403)

Thus Peza mirrors Fleming's desertion of the tattered man, and for the same reason. Both men are afraid of death, which hovers around the wounded men.

Having lost his romantic idealism and having discovered that no one will save him from his situation, Peza becomes motivated strictly by pride. The lieutenant smiled derisively at him when Peza passionately expressed his desire to fight. The smile piqued Peza at the time; now the thought of it goads him, just as Fleming and Collins are goaded. In fact, his thoughts reflect clearly those

of both characters as he approaches battle:

> Peza felt that his pride was playing a great trick in forcing him forward in this manner under conditions of strangeness, isolation, and ignorance. But he recalled the manner of the lieutenant, the smile on the hilltop among the flying peasants. Peza blushed, and pulled the peak of his helmet down on his forehead. He strode on firmly. Nevertheless, he hated the lieutenant, and he resolved that on some future occasion he would take much trouble to arrange a stinging social revenge upon that grinning jackanapes. It did not occur to him, until later, that he was now going to battle mainly because at a previous time a certain man had smiled. (p. 400)

The only way that he knows to retaliate shows the narrowness of Peza. His life is based on his social code--which is depicted by Peza's polite bowing to everyone throughout the story--and a refraction of that code constitutes the severest punishment that he knows how to inflict. The social code is analogous to the code of war. Crane very carefully pictures the first, showing its failure as a way toward a meaningful existence, and thus he indicates the necessity for the second.

As Peza moves closer to the actual fighting, he becomes a spectator of war in the manner of Fleming and Collins. Crane makes it evident, however, that this protagonist's view is not clear: "Peza, breathless, pale, felt that he had been set upon a pillar, and was surveying mankind, the world. In the meantime dust had got in his eye. He took his handkerchief and mechanically administered to it" (p. 404). The dust in Peza's eye reinforces Crane's

portrayal of him as a man who does not comprehend his situation. It mars his vision and does not allow him to see war as it really is. At the same time, the dust causes Peza to focus his attention on himself rather than on what he sees. He is, as a result, as self-centered as he was when he viewed the peasants earlier.

When Peza comes to the threshold of battle, his clean, new clothes separate him from the experienced soldiers with their dirty and worn uniforms. He is given the opportunity to fight, and he fails to pass the test because he is unequipped as a man. Crane symbolizes Peza's condition with the protagonist's lack of fighting gear. He is instructed to strip a corpse of its bandoleer and rifle in order to become a part of the fighting group. In the face of death Peza succumbs to his fear. His superficial code helps him through the first ordeal of his test; for when he gives an officer some tobacco, the officer orders another man to strip the corpse for Peza as a social gesture of appreciation. However, when Peza puts on the bandoleer and becomes intimately involved with the danger and death of war, his social code fails him:

> Peza, having crossed the long cartridge belt on his breast, felt that the dead man had flung his two arms around him. . . . he felt, besides the clutch of a corpse about his neck, that the rifle was as unhumanly horrible as a snake that lives in a tomb. . . . The bandoleer gripped him tighter, he wished to raise his hands to his throat, like a man who is choking. (p. 406)

He is much like Henry Fleming struggling against the symbolic blanket of fear in his first battle. However, Peza does not recover as Fleming does through the process of learning. He is defeated by the test of war and runs away; but, unlike Henry Fleming, he does not redeem himself later and become a man.

In contrast to Peza is a peasant soldier who embodies all of the stolidity of the seasoned veteran:

> One bearded man sat munching a great bit of hard bread. Fat, greasy, squat, he was like an idol made of tallow. Peza felt dimly that there was a distinction between this man and a young student who could write sonnets and play the piano quite well. This old blockhead was coolly gnawing at the bread, while he--Peza--was being throttled by a dead man's arms. (p. 406)

The peasant and Peza are at opposite ends of a scale. At one end the peasant is completely unthinking and animalistic.[12] At the other end Peza depends entirely on his reason, which is incomplete because he is unrealistic.[13] Neither man, therefore, is Crane's complete soldier.

Peza's failure is fully seen as he runs from battle. However, the author makes his failure doubly clear by bringing him into direct contact with the child. As the correspondent drags himself, panting and ragged, over the crest of the mountain, the child stares at him with eyes

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[12] See Chap. I, p. 19, note 18.

[13] Solomon (p. 109) expresses Crane's view when he states that Peza "is a completely mocked personage, a parody of the military hero."

"large and inscrutably wise and sad" (p. 408). He asks Peza the question which states the irony of the story: "Are you a man?" (p. 408)[14] The triple symbolism of this question is obvious. Solomon reports it concisely: "First, he has become brutalized by his war-induced panic--is he man or animal? Then, is he a man--a warrior--or a craven coward? Finally, is he a man--an adult--or even less mature than the child who has not been spoiled by society . . .?"[15] Peza cannot answer the question because he is too physically exhausted and because he has not learned the answer from his experience in war. He has learned only that he is insignificant in the big, cruel universe. Crane indicates both the sum of Peza's learning and his failure to become a man in his closing statement:

> Peza gasped in the manner of a fish. Palsied, windless, and abject, he confronted the primitive courage, the sovereign child, the brother of the mountains, the sky, and the sea, and he knew that the definition of his misery could be written on a wee grass-blade. (p. 408)

Peza is Crane's great Failure. Embodied within him are the faults of man--pride, selfishness, and fear. These faults are, in Crane's own words, "the majestic forces which are arrayed against man's true success . . . man's own

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[14]Peza's failure lies in the negative answer to this question. He is not a man, in contrast to Crane's statement about Henry Fleming at the end of The Red Badge of Courage (p. 375): "He was a man."

[15]Solomon, p. 112.

colossal impulses more strong than chains."[16] Peza fails because he is unable to overcome these impulses by learning and adhering to the rules of war which make up Crane's code of conduct.

George W. Johnson, in his discussion of Crane's man in war, states that man's success depends on his ability to learn what constitutes the grounds for proper conduct.[17] Peza's conduct is based on the superficial social code which comes from his limited experience. What he fails to learn is what Johnson calls decorum, which may be equated with Crane's code of conduct. Johnson points out the contrast between the two codes as Crane sees them. The critic states: "The decorum of veterans, unlike the pretensions of normative society's ceremonies of behavior, was created in response to reality, searing and annealing."[18] Peza's self-deception keeps him from the annealment of reality; therefore, he is unable to respond by learning the code of conduct. Thus Peza as a definition of what man must not be further illustrates Crane's code.

A definite statement of the code of conduct is made by Crane in "The Clan of No-Name," a story set in the Cuban

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[16] Stephen Crane's Love Letters to Nellie Crouse, ed. Edwin H. Cady and Lester G. Wells (Syracuse, 1954), p. 44.

[17] Johnson, p. 250.

[18] Ibid., p. 251.

War and written by the author after he had experienced that war for himself. It deals with a man who goes into battle innocent of knowledge but who quickly learns the rules and exemplifies by the performance of his duty Crane's concept of the good soldier. Crane reiterates in this story the process of learning of his previous stories as well as the contrast between a false social code and the real code of war.

The title alone expresses the theme of the story. "The Clan" suggests Crane's theme of brotherhood, and "No-Name" suggests the lack of individual identity and therefore the universality of his man in war. Crane further expresses his theme by prefacing his story with a riddle:

> Unwind my riddle.
> Cruel as hawks the hours fly;
> Wounded men seldom come home to die;
> The hard waves see an arm flung high;
> Scorn hits strong because of a lie;
> Yet there exists a mystic tie.
> Unwind my riddle. (p. 256)

Crane portrays in four lines the cruelty of an uncaring universe. The "wounded men" suggests that this cruelty is seen in war; however, the rest of the riddle indicates the universal aspect of it. The hours are "cruel as hawks" because time brings man ever closer to inevitable death, and man cannot stop it. The inability of wounded men to "come home to die" shows the break between pre-war innocence and the experience of battle. Once man has committed himself

to war, he cannot return to his previous existence.[19] The "lie" represents the falseness of the social code, and "scorn" is punishment for man. All of these things lead to man's ultimate failure unless he accepts the hope that Crane offers in the "mystic tie." This mystic tie represents the mysterious brotherhood which Crane first mentions in The Red Badge. It is mystic because man cannot comprehend it. What he can learn, however, is that there is hope for him in this brotherhood. Manolo Prat,[20] the protagonist in "The Clan of No-Name," is killed in war, which represents the cruel forces of the universe; but his adherence to the code of conduct places him within the mystic tie, and he is able to accept his death with dignity--which is all that Crane's man can hope to achieve ultimately.

Before entering war, Manolo exchanges vows of love with Margharita. His faithfulness to his love becomes reflected in his loyalty to his fellow soldiers in battle. Margharita, on the other hand, immediately turns to another suitor as soon as she learns of Manolo's death. Her willingness to forget her former lover so quickly indicates the superficiality of her love, which is based on the same sort of social code that Peza lives by. As a result, it

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[19]This is especially clear in Collins' feeling of the chasm between himself and his comrades once he has committed himself to getting the water.

[20]The name "Manolo Prat" can be easily changed to "no man" and "trap," symbolizing universal man in a trap.

is meaningless. It is like the lie of Crane's riddle and deserves only scorn. Margharita's love affairs are like games. When she exchanges pictures with Manolo in the beginning, she plays a role; and when she entertains her suitor later, she manipulates him according to the social rules. Thus Crane equates her world with a game just as he does war and draws a contrast between the two codes which govern them.

Manolo's reaction to his first and only experience under fire shows his learning and his fulfillment of the code of war. He is introduced in contrast with the veteran soldiers. Crane describes him as

> . . . a young man with a face less bronzed, and with very new accoutrements. On the strap of his cartouche were a gold star and a silver star, placed in a horizontal line, denoting that he was a second lieutenant. He seemed very happy; he laughed at all their jests, although his eye roved continually over the sunny grasslands, where was going to happen his first fight. One of his stars was bright, like his hopes; the other was pale, like death. (p. 529)

Crane's very obvious description illustrates man's first contact with war. His equipment is new, just as he is. His eye roves, indicating the trepidation within him. His stars symbolize the presence of both hope and death in war.

Manolo is sent by the general to tell the captain to hold off the enemy for ten minutes so that a party of arms carriers can have time to get past them. As he sets out on this mission, Manolo is confronted with his test of courage, which is to fulfill his duty in spite of his great

fear. He quickly becomes Crane's real soldier as he passes his test.

As Manolo starts out, he shows his ignorance of his position in war. "Once out in the field, and the bullets seemed to know him and call for him and speak their wish to kill him" (p. 532). Here he contemplates his uniqueness, just as Fleming, Collins, and Peza do when each feels war threatening him individually. But immediately Manolo's feelings change; and ". . . he ran on, because it was his duty, and because he would be shamed before men if he did not do his duty, and because he was desolate out there all alone in the fields with death" (p. 532). He expresses the importance of the judgment of his fellow soldiers and shows the threat of isolation and fear which he must overcome. "He did not care to do it, but he thought that was what men of his kind would do in such a case. There was a standard, and he must follow it, obey it, because it was a monarch, the Prince of Conduct" (p. 532). Thus, he accepts the responsibility of his duty. Crane spells out his code of conduct through Manolo's interpretation of his situation.

Manolo passes his test of courage and is rewarded by praise from an officer whom he respects. He then encounters a corpse and is able to look at death as "a mere thing" (p. 533), which further assures his role of a seasoned soldier. From this point on, he advances willingly, finally landing in a foxhole with three men--two

dead, one dying. This hole is Manolo's trap, and he realizes it; but he remains there awaiting death because he has no choice as a member of the battle brotherhood. He cannot desert the wounded soldier. "The man--simple doomed peasant --was not of his kind, but the law on fidelity was clear" (p. 535).

Manolo represents an initiated soldier as he appraises his position:

> He knew that he was thrusting himself into a trap whose door, once closed, opened only when the black hand knocked; and every part of him seemed to be in panic-stricken revolt. But something controlled him; something moved him inexorably in one direction; he perfectly understood, but he was only sad, sad with a serene dignity, with the countenance of a mournful young prince. He was of a kind--that seemed to be it; and the men of his kind, on peak or plain, from the dark northern ice fields to the hot wet jungles, through all wine and want, through all lies and unfamiliar truth, dark or light--the men of his kind were governed by their gods, and each man knew the law and yet could not give tongue to it, but it was the law; and if the spirits of the men of his kind were all sitting in critical judgment upon him even then in the sky, he could not have bettered his conduct; he needs must obey the law, and always with the law there is only one way. But from peak and plain, from dark northern ice fields and hot wet jungles, through wine and want, through all lies and unfamiliar truth, dark and light, he heard breathed to him the approval and the benediction of his brethren. (p. 535)

Through this description Crane portrays his protagonist as a part of the brotherhood of man in war. He is indeed a member of the Clan of No-Name.

To Crane the brotherhood of man is "the mysterious fraternity born of the smoke and danger of death" (The Red

Badge, p. 272). In order to be eligible for initiation into this fraternity, man must pass his test of courage, the prerequisites for which are self-knowledge (man must realize his insignificance in the universe) and selflessness (he must be willing to sacrifice himself for his fellow man). After becoming a part of the group and living according to the code of conduct, the ultimate reward is a personal dignity. Therefore, Crane's code is somewhat circular in concept. Adherence to one aspect of the code is both the result of and the prerequisite for adherence to another aspect. The qualities which make up the code are interdependent, and man cannot attain Crane's heroic ideal without first adhering to all aspects of the code.

Crane's protagonists up to this point offer examples of aspects of the code. Thus, a composite made from the discussion of these characters defines to some extent his idea of the complete soldier. Although Henry Fleming generally represents a total adherence to the code, he specifically exemplifies the acquisition of self-knowledge. Individual selflessness is most obvious in Fred Collins' act of giving water to a dying man. The soldier's duty--performing the business of war--is brought out most clearly in the peasant soldier and the lieutenant of "Death and the Child" and in Manolo Prat of "The Clan of No-Name." At the same time, these experienced soldiers exemplify Crane's concept of group loyalty. From these examples of

the soldier's adherence to a code of conduct in war, Crane's concept of a code for man in relation to the universe is delineated.

There is general agreement among critics who interpret Crane's code of conduct that the code is based on certain virtues which man must strive to attain. Basically, these virtues are courage, honesty, and sympathy.[21] That Crane felt courage to be an essential element in man's ability to survive in the universe is best exemplified by his overall use of the soldier in war to represent man's struggle to overcome fear. The soldier's courage, which is shown by his willingness to face death, mirrors the courage of man in general. To Crane the greatest courage is the courage it takes merely to be human in the face of the overwhelming odds against humanity in a naturalistic universe.[22] For example, Henry Fleming's courage is measured by his ability in the end to be "a man," and this ability illustrates for the author the success of his protagonist.

Honesty as a virtue which man must achieve is an essential part of the code because it is the basis of self-knowledge.[23] To be honest about oneself eliminates

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[21]Max Westbrook, "Stephen Crane: The Pattern of Affirmation," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, XIV (Dec. 1959), 229.

[22]Edwin H. Cady, Stephen Crane, U.S. Author Series (New York, 1962), p. 143.

[23]Robert Schneider, "Stephen Crane: The Promethean Protest," Five Novelists of the Progressive Era (New York, 1965), p. 95.

the self-deception which stands between man and his adherence to the code. With the discovery of his true self, man can then discover the comradeship of other men. It is this comradeship of men in battle that Crane uses to symbolize the universal brotherhood of man.

Sympathy encompasses the brotherhood of man, the self-sacrifice of one man for another, and the concept of duty which is a result of the brotherhood. An examination of Daniel Hoffman's interpretation of Crane's code best exemplifies this selflessness and duty. According to Hoffman, Crane's universe is devoid of moral purpose, and the only way in which man can survive in it is to live by a code. "We see," Hoffman states, "that the code Crane's characters must seek and live by is an acceptance of the fearful responsibility and pain that is the dignity of man."[24] The responsibility is duty, and man must be selfless and must sacrifice himself to the performance of this duty in order to achieve dignity.[25]

The code cannot be fully understood by Crane's man. Most critics agree on this, although Max Westbrook, in his interpretation of Crane's code, sees the author validating

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[24]The Poetry of Stephen Crane (New York, 1956), p. 172.

[25]Hoffman's interpretation of Crane's code is a Christian one. Man's sacrifice of himself is possible only because of Christ's suffering and sacrifice of Himself. Therefore, His gift to man is the mystery of heroism, and His spirit is reborn in each selfless deed that man performs. This spirit is the dignity of man.

man's attempt to understand it.[26] Indeed, in the very process of learning the code, Crane's man comes to realize that he cannot question what he must do; he must simply accept it. The mysterious element surrounding his protagonists' initiation into battle is evidence of this. For example, Fleming is unable to reason out his veteran-like action in the later battle; the title of Collins' story indicates that there is a mystery about his achievement; and, most explicitly, Manolo "knew the law and yet could not give tongue to it" (p. 535). Crane's code of conduct is, ultimately, a code which all who adhere to it know, but which none can express.[27]

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[26] Westbrook, p. 229.

[27] Schneider, p. 96.

CHAPTER III

CRANE'S COMPLETE SOLDIER

Joseph Conrad indicates what Stephen Crane felt to be important in man's relation to the universe. Conrad writes:

> . . . [Crane] appreciated my effort to present a group of men held together by a common loyalty, and a common perplexity in a struggle not with human enemies, but with the hostile conditions testing their faithfulness to the conditions of their own calling.[1]

The faithfulness of man to the conditions of his own calling is exhibited by Crane in his protagonists' adherence to a code of conduct. It is this faithfulness in the face of the forces of an uncaring and cruel universe that Crane examines in the stories to be discussed in this chapter.

"The Little Regiment" is one of Stephen Crane's earliest war tales, written before he had experienced war for himself, and yet in it he deals with the experienced soldiers who adhere to a code of conduct and thus perform their duty the best that they know how. These soldiers exemplify the same qualities of the veteran that the author pictures in the stories written after he had seen war.

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[1] "Stephen Crane," Last Essays (London, 1926), p. 137.

The plot of "The Little Regiment" is rather superficial, dealing with two brothers, Dan and Billie Dempster, in the midst of the drama of war. The brothers constantly quarrel with each other, professing mutual dislike and suspicion, and their arguments provide entertainment for the rest of the regiment. When it is feared that one of the brothers has been killed in battle, the other is very deeply affected, proving all their belligerence toward each other to be mere show. However, when the brother turns up alive, the two resume their argumentative ways. All of this simply shows that beneath their facades they do actually love each other.

The Dempster brothers can be looked on as a parody of Crane's theme of the brotherhood of man. They are not, however, the primary concern of the story, for Crane's emphasis here seems to be the professionalism of the soldier.[2] This professionalism is revealed through the behavior of the soldiers as they carry out their business. In spite of the harassment from both nature and war, the regiment accepts its responsibility, which is to obey orders. Crane's opening scene depicts the weather which harasses the men:

> The column in the roadway was ankle-deep in mud. The men swore piously at the rain which drizzled

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[2]Maxwell Geismar, "Stephen Crane: Halfway House," Rebels and Authors: The American Novel, 1890-1915 (Boston, 1953), p. 91.

> upon them compelling them to stand always very erect in fear of the drops that would sweep in under their coat collars. The fog was as cold as wet clothes. The men stuffed their hands deep into their pockets, and huddled their muskets in their arms. The machinery of orders had rooted these soldiers deeply into the mud precisely as almighty nature roots mullein stalks. (p. 276)[3]

While the men endure the hardships of the weather and the mud, they are also constantly reminded of the danger of war by the sounds of battle:

> The enclouded air vibrated with noises made by hidden colossal things. The infantry tramplings, the heavy rumbling of the artillery, made the earth speak of gigantic preparation. Guns on distant heights thundered . . . . These sounds, near and remote, defined the tremendous width of the stage of the prospective drama. The voices of the guns, slightly casual, unexcited in their challenges and warnings, could not destroy the unutterable eloquence of the word in the air, a meaning of impending struggle which made the breath halt at the lips. (p. 276)

Reaction of the soldiers to the forces of war and the universe indicates their professionalism. Crane expresses this reaction: "Upon this threshold of a wild scene of death they, in short, defied the proportion of events with that splendor of heedlessness which belongs only to veterans" (p. 277).

Crane uses the forces of nature in "The Little Regiment" not only to reinforce his theme of the cruelty of the universe--with the cold rain and mud with which the soldiers must contend--but also to express the unreasonableness and uncertainty of war. This the author does by

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[3]All quotations from the short stories are from The Complete Short Stories and Sketches of Stephen Crane, ed. Thomas A. Gullason (New York, 1963).

surrounding the battle with fog. "Men got lost in the fog, and men were found again" (p. 285), Crane states. Thus, the confusion of war is enhanced by the fog which obscures men's vision. The fog parts at one point in the battle, giving the soldiers a momentary glimpse of the enemy. At the same time the imminence of death is made clear by Dan's killing an enemy soldier:

> In one mystic changing of the fog, as if the fingers of spirits were drawing aside these draperies, a small group of the gray skirmishers, silent, statuesque, was suddenly disclosed to Dan and those about him. So vivid and near were they that there was something uncanny in the revelation.
>
> There might have been a second of mutual staring. Then each rifle in each group was at the shoulder. As Dan's glance flashed along the barrel of his weapon, the figure of a man suddenly loomed as if the musket had been a telescope. The short black beard, the slouch hat, the pose of the man as he sighted to shoot, made a quick picture in Dan's mind. The same moment, it would seem, he pulled his own trigger, and the man, smitten, lurched forward, while his exploding rifle made a slanting crimson streak in the air, and the slouch hat fell before the body. The billows of the fog, governed by singular impulses, rolled between. (p. 285)

With this very detailed description of one man killing another Crane portrays the kinship that soldiers must have with death because it is always so close to them in battle.

With the realization that death is always present comes the feeling that one's own death will not have any effect on the universe. Crane expresses through Billie this feeling of the insignificance of man in war:

> The terrible voices from the hills [the sounds of war] told him that in this wide conflict his life was an insignificant fact, and that his death would

> be an insignificant fact. They portended the whirlwind to which he would be as necessary as a butterfly's wing. (p. 279)

Although Billie sees the insignificance of his death, he does not exhibit any fear concerning it. Thus he exemplifies the veteran's willingness to accept death.

In his presentation of these veterans Crane emphasizes the soldier's duty. Soldiering is his job, and he fulfills his obligation without complaint. This is made evident by two men's discussion of the chaotic situation of the army. The men can see that their position in relation to the enemy is quite dangerous; nevertheless, they do not question their officers:

> To their minds, infantry and artillery were in a most precarious jumble in the streets of the town; but they did not grow nervous over it, for they were used to having the army appear in a precarious jumble to their minds. They had learned to accept such puzzling situations as a consequence of their position in the ranks, and were now usually in possession of a simple but perfectly immovable faith that somebody understood the jumble. Even if they had been convinced that the army was a headless monster, they would merely have nodded with the veteran's singular cynicism. It was none of their business as soldiers. Their duty was to grab sleep and food when occasion permitted, and cheerfully fight wherever their feet were planted until orders came. This was a task sufficiently absorbing. (p. 282)[4]

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[4]It is surely this sort of description which prompted Robert H. Davis ("Introduction," Tales of Two Wars, Vol. II of The Work of Stephen Crane, ed. Wilson Follett [New York, 1925], p. xxii) to say: "His men go forward always, sometimes with laughter, not infrequently in tears; halting, wavering, but always struggling toward some objective beyond. Right or wrong, there was always a sense of expedition, organized, officered, plunging onward. Only the dead stopped."

Fidelity to their fellow soldiers is as important to the regiment as fidelity to duty. Group loyalty among the soldiers, mirrored in the brotherhood of Dan and Billie, is brought out by Crane in the men's praise for their regiment: "Of their own corps they spoke with a deep veneration, an idolatry, a supreme confidence which apparently would not blanch to see it matched against everything" (p. 282). This loyalty is part of their being veterans. In The Red Badge of Courage this feeling of group loyalty comes about only after the soldiers fight together. Before the battle they bicker among themselves, but as they gain experience in battle Crane speaks of them as "the blue wave" and "the blue whirl of men" (The Red Badge of Courage, p. 366), indicating that they have become a fighting unit rather than the anonymous "vast blue demonstration" (p. 245) that they are at the beginning of the novel.

"The Little Regiment" has been called by one critic the image of thousands of men being pushed into a hopeless incident.[5] The hopelessness of their situation exists in the defeat they suffer when they charge the enemy. The wave of their attack breaks and their military failure becomes obvious. Crane exemplifies the courage of the veterans by portraying them in the performance of their business despite the odds against them. He contrasts them

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[5]E. R. Hagemann, "Crane's 'Real' War in His Short Stories," AQ, VIII (Winter 1956), 356-367.

with the inexperienced soldiers in the battle:

> Veterans could now be distinguished from recruits. The new regiments were instantly gone, lost, scattered, as if they never had been. But the sweeping failure of the charge, the battle, could not make the veterans forget their business. With a last throe, the band of maniacs drew itself up and blazed a volley at the hill, insignificant to those iron entrenchments, but nevertheless expressing that singular final despair which enables men coolly to defy the walls of a city of death.
>
> After this episode the men renamed their command. They called it the Little Regiment. (p. 288)

The behavior of the Little Regiment reflects Crane's view of what men learn from war. They have learned through their experiences how to live according to a code of conduct. They are veterans, and as such they embody the traits of Crane's complete soldier. These traits are self-knowledge (they realize their insignificance in relation to the war); brotherhood (they are loyal to their fellow soldiers); courage (they are willing to face death); and responsibility (they obey orders and perform their duty unquestioningly).

"The Veteran" is another exemplification by Crane of the soldier who has learned to adhere to a code of conduct through his experience in war. This story is a statement by the author about the experienced soldier, as the title suggests, and it deals with his attitude toward himself and war. In it Crane turns again to Henry Fleming as his protagonist, and if it is taken as a reassessment of his war experience in The Red Badge, then the story shows that the protagonist has indeed completed his process of learning.

Eric Solomon sees the veteran as "the same Henry Fleming who has come through the horror described in the novel to learn that a man may run and run and yet still be a good soldier, and that war is neither heroic nor pretty, but a duty and grim."[6]

By having his protagonist relate his war experience to a group of admiring friends, Crane contrasts the veteran's attitude toward war with that of the unlearned Henry Fleming in the novel. In The Red Badge the uninitiated Fleming foresees the scene of "The Veteran" in the following way: "He could see himself in a room of warm tints telling tales to listeners. He could exhibit laurels. They were insignificant, still, in a district where laurels were infrequent, they might shine" (The Red Badge, p. 328). Yet the story-telling scene in "The Veteran" is very different from this. The older Fleming admits to having been frightened and presents in a humorous light his old feelings of self-centeredness: "'The trouble was,' said the old man, 'I thought that they were all shooting at me. Yes sir, I thought every man in the other army was aiming at me in particular, and only me . . . .'" (p. 291) He even admits the once-damning sin of running from battle, thus showing his disdain of the romantic notions of bravery in war.[7]

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[6]Stephen Crane: From Parody to Realism (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), p. 98.

[7]It is interesting to note, however, that Crane does

The earlier Henry Fleming can be seen in one of the listeners.[8] "Little Jim, his grandson, was visibly horror-stricken. His hands were clasped nervously, and his eyes were wide with astonishment at this terrible scandal, his most magnificent grandfather telling such a thing" (p. 291). He is the picture of childhood, the innocence of not-knowing, and does not realize the insignificance of even "his most magnificent grandfather" to the universe.

The story exemplifies Fleming's adherence to the code of conduct which he learned in the war. In the middle of the night after the old man and his grandson have returned home from the story-telling scene, the barn catches fire, and it is in the chaos of that fire that Fleming illustrates what he has learned from war.[9] The fire is caused by a farm hand whom Crane calls the Swede. His drunkenness and irrationality are underlying causes of the fire and are perhaps reminiscent of the irrationality of war.

Old Fleming exhibits true courage in rescuing the animals from the burning barn. His efficient action in the midst of the terror of the fire, which mirrors the terror of battle, is akin to that exhibited by businesslike

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not have his protagonist making light of his sin of desertion of the tattered man. This would seem to indicate the seriousness of Fleming's failure to help his fellow man in contrast to the lesser sin of running from battle.

[8]Solomon, p. 98.

[9]Ibid.

soldiers in the performance of their duty. Fleming's ability to get things done is heightened by Crane's contrast of him to the other men around the fire. The men run around in circles trying to get water from a well, "a leisurely old machine" (p. 293), while Fleming alone strives to get the animals out. The confusion exhibited by the men in their futile attempts to put out the fire is the same sort of confusion exhibited by the inexperienced Henry Fleming and Peza when they try to find reason in war. While the men waste precious time and effort trying to put out the fire with small and impotent buckets, the veteran does what needs to be done first. Thus Crane contrasts the calm efficiency of the experienced soldier to the confusion of the uninitiated.

When Fleming thinks he has rescued all of the animals and is standing in front of the barn watching its inevitable destruction by the fire, the Swede suddenly reminds him of colts which are at the back of the barn. An attempt to rescue the colts seems hopeless to the men, and yet Fleming feels that he must go in and get them. His compassion will not let him leave "the poor little things" (p. 294) in the burning barn. He willingly faces death to try to save the colts, rather than deserting them as the unlearned Henry Fleming deserts the tattered man. In this the veteran is like Collins, who faces death to offer aid to the lieutenant. A further similarity exists in the futility of each

man's act. The lieutenant dies even though Collins tries to give him the water; and the colts are hopelessly trapped regardless of Fleming's attempt to save them. The importance of each man's act lies not in the result, therefore, but in his performing it.

Crane describes Fleming's death somewhat romantically:

> When the roof fell in, a great funnel of smoke swarmed toward the sky, as if the old man's mighty spirit, released from its body--a little bottle--had swelled like the genie of fable. The smoke was tinted rose-hue from the flames, and perhaps the unutterable midnights of the universe will have no power to daunt the color of this soul. (p. 294)

Here Crane indicates the success that Fleming has attained, which is the ability to confront death with the same sort of dignity that Manolo Prat exhibits in "The Clan of No-Name." Henry Fleming's soldierly spirit can almost be seen joining "the spirits of the men of his kind . . . in the sky" (p. 535) that Manolo reflected upon in the fox hole as he awaited his inevitable death. Thus Crane shows that the veteran is an initiated and complete soldier, one worthy of being included in the battle brotherhood.

Another portrayal of the complete soldier, and perhaps Crane's most explicit, is seen in "Virtue in War," a story set in the Cuban War and written from the author's own battle experience. In it Crane depicts an officer whose whole life is the army. The story is subtitled

"West Pointer and Volunteer," and it is through contrasting this officer with an inexperienced soldier that Crane shows the former's strict adherence to a code of conduct.

Major Gates, the West Pointer, comes back into the army with the outbreak of the Cuban War. He brings to his command the discipline and hard work which is demanded of a good soldier, and the reaction of various members of the regiment is indicative of their positions as soldiers. The colonel of the regiment is an old soldier and is overjoyed to have the able Gates in his group. However, the senior major, who is not a veteran and who bases his command on his ability to be popular (the social code), disapproves of Gates. The reaction of "old soldiers of the regular army" (p. 615) shows their experience, for they rejoice at Gates' taking command. Crane states their feelings: "He would know his work and he would know <u>their</u> work, and then in battle there would be killed only what men were absolutely necessary, and the sick list would be comparatively free of fools" (p. 615). On the other hand, the inexperienced volunteers are interested only in knowing whether or not they will like Gates personally.

Crane depicts the attitude of the inexperienced soldier in Lige Wigram, a volunteer who comes to Gates on a very informal basis to introduce himself and be friendly. Gates' reaction to Lige's attempt to fraternize is stern and cold, signifying that Lige is out of place. Lige is

angered by the rebuff. His resentment at being thought of by Major Gates as only "a unit in a body of three hundred men" (p. 618) mentally keeps Lige from becoming a part of the group which Gates transforms into soldiers. "When the battalion became the best in the regiment he had no part in the pride of the companies. He was sorry when men began to speak well of Gates. He was really a very consistent hater" (p. 618).

Gates' reaction to Lige indicates the chasm which Crane sees existing between his complete soldier and the unlearned recruit. Gates, as well as Fleming in "The Veteran," exemplifies Manolo Prat's thoughts about "the men of his kind" (p. 535) who seem to be of a special breed. They are all members of the brotherhood of war and are set apart from the uninitiated such as Lige Wigram and Peza.

War is the business of these veteran fighting men, and this Crane portrays extensively in "Virtue in War." The reaction of the old soldiers to Gates' arrival emphasizes the fact that he would know the work of the army. When Lige approaches the major, he is greeted coldly by the officer with, "And now, what is your business?" (p. 617) Of course, Lige's fault lies in the fact that he has no business being where he is. As the new troops are moved into Tampa to await ships for Cuba, two regular regiments look at them warily. Rather than complain about the inexperienced men accompanying them to the first landing

in Cuba, however, "they minded their own regiments" (p. 616). Thus, Crane substitutes "regiments" for "business" in a common phrase, which strengthens his image of veterans as men doing their jobs.

The businesslike attitude of the soldiers stems from their complete acceptance of their duty; and the opposite of this acceptance is depicted by Crane in the unlearned men who continually seek answers from war. Major Gates describes these men when he is questioned by his old comrades about the reliability of this new regiment with which he is now connected:

> "Well," said Gates, "they won't run the length of a tentpeg if they can gain any idea of what they're fighting; they won't bunch if they've about six acres of open ground to move in; they won't get rattled at all if they see you fellows taking it easy, and they'll fight like the devil as long as they thoroughly, completely, absolutely, satisfactorily, exhaustively understand what the business is. They're lawyers. All excepting my battalion." (p. 620)

Gates' sarcastic description presages the action of the story. As the regiment moves into battle, the senior major's battalion fails to act properly, falling back and hampering the efforts of the rest of the regiment to advance. Gates forces his way past the other major, taking his troops with him, and as a result he wins the praise of his colonel. ". . . Gates took all he could get, and his battalion deployed and advanced like men. The old colonel almost burst into tears, and he cast one quick glance of

gratitude at Gates, which the younger officer wore on his heart like a secret decoration" (p. 621). In Gates' reaction to his superior's praise, Crane depicts once again the importance that approval by his fellow soldiers has for the veteran.

The men of Gates' battalion prove to be good soldiers in battle as a result of his training. As good soldiers they are able to learn what to expect from war. This is made clear by Crane when he describes their reaction to the inevitable wounded men moving rearward:

> The men of the 307th looked at calm creatures who had divers punctures, and they were made better. These men told them that it was only necessary to keep agoing. They of the 307th lay on their bellies, red, sweating, and panting, and heeded the voice of the elder brother. (p. 622)

These men are thus able to comprehend something from the wounded men, which the early Henry Fleming and Peza were unable to do.[10] They do not find the meaning of war, for they do not seek it. They do, however, find all that there is to know--"that it was only necessary to keep agoing."

As Gates' charge begins to show signs of success,

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[10]In another of his war stories, "An Episode of War," Crane describes more fully his often-used phenomenon of the wounded man: "A wound gives strange dignity to him who bears it. Well men shy from this new and terrible majesty. It is as if the wounded man's hand is upon the curtain which hangs before the revelations of all existence--the meaning of ants, potentates, wars, cities, sunshine, snows, a feather dropped from a bird's wing; and the power of it sheds radiance upon a bloody form, and makes the other men understand sometimes that they are little" (p. 654).

the major is mortally wounded. Some of his troops stop to help him, but he orders them on. Only Lige Wigram remains, despite Gates' orders. Lige tries to make amends for his former hatred of the major because he has come to admire him in battle. However, Gates still refuses to act against the rules of his profession by fraternizing with the private. The failure of Lige to adhere to a code of conduct is shown through the contrast between his praise of Gates and the colonel's. In the unwritten laws of war, talk cheapens. Lige does not know this and appears in the same light as Peza when the latter tries to talk to the soldiers about his situation. The two characters live by the social code, which insists upon talk to express man's feelings. In reaction to Lige's praise, Gates repeatedly orders the private, who has also been wounded, to the rear. Through the younger man's thoughts, Crane expresses the difference between the West Pointer and the volunteer:

> In this reiteration Lige discovered a resemblance to that first old offensive phrase, "Come to attention and salute." He pondered over the resemblance, and he saw that nothing had changed. The man bleeding to death was the same man to whom he had once paid a friendly visit with unfriendly results. He thought now that he perceived a certain hopeless gulf, a gulf which is real or unreal, according to circumstance. Sometimes all men are equal; occasionally they are not. If Gates had ever criticized Lige's manipulation of a hay fork on the farm at home, Lige would have furiously disdained his hate or blame. He saw now that he must not openly approve the major's conduct in war. The major's pride was in his business, and his, Lige's, congratulations were beyond all enduring. (p. 623)

The end of the story illustrates Crane's concept of the insignificance of man in the universe. Although the charge led by Gates is a success, the author puts it in the proper perspective by simulating post-battle appraisals of it: "Yes, it was very good, very good indeed, but did you notice what was being done at the same moment by the 12th, the 17th, the 7th, the 8th, the 25th, the--?" (p. 622)

In the same way, the death of Gates is shown to have no effect on the war as a whole by the banal conversation among three correspondents reflecting on the battle. The men are discussing mint juleps, and one of them digresses:

> "By the way," said one, at last, "it's too bad about poor old Gates of the 307th. He bled to death. His men were crazy. They were blubbering and cursing around there like wild people. It seems that when they got back there to look for him they found him just about gone, and another wounded man was trying to stop the flow with his hat! His hat, mind you. Poor old Gatesie!" (p. 624)

Immediately the conversation turns back to mint juleps.

The ineffectuality of Lige's trying to stop the blood with his hat indicates the impotence of man against the forces of war. Crane expresses this further when he ends the story on an ironic note by having Lige ask the correspondents for a bottle. They think he is requesting a drink and ridicule him. When he explains that he wants an empty bottle to place Gates' name in and bury with his body, the only thing the men can say is "Oh!" The uninitiated Lige's

desire to maintain the major's identity for proper burial is a social gesture. It is the only way that he knows to honor his officer.[11]

The weak reply by the correspondents symbolizes the futility of man's efforts to find reason in war. Crane has built up Gates throughout the story, indicating what a good soldier he is and showing through Lige's change in attitude toward him the importance he has for his men. Rather than having a cathartic scene in the end express the great loss to the army that Gates' death poses, Crane merely rests his story on the simple utterance--"Oh!"[12] With this ending the author expresses the reality of death in war. It is always there, and no one can predict it or escape it. It is the realization of this which determines the attitude of the complete soldier. He realizes that death is ever-present and that it is not the romantic, heroic death which the inexperienced soldier expects from war. It is, on the

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[11]In "Mr. Crane, of Havana," a dispatch to the New York Journal, November 9, 1898, from Cuba, Crane describes the sort of men that he portrays through Lige Wigram: "No doubt the men in these regiments are good fellows enough, generous, kind, brave, devoted to their country, but they have not played the part of thorough soldiers, and the only man who has any business to engage in war is the soldier" (The War Dispatches of Stephen Crane, ed. R. W. Stallman and E. R. Hagemann [New York, 1964], p. 229).

[12]Crane ends his last war story, "The Upturned Face," with a similar device. As two men bury their comrade in arms, the falling earth makes a sound which expresses the meaninglessness of his death and of war--"plop."

other hand, just another part of the business of war, and the willingness to accept it is part of the soldier's duty in carrying out that business.

Crane also deals with the business of war and the regular soldier's ability to perform his duty in "The Price of the Harness." This story was originally entitled "The Woof of Thin Red Threads" to exemplify the mechanical nature of war. The original title comes from a passage in the story which describes this machinelike aspect of war:

> The line now sounded like a great machine set to running frantically in the open air, the bright sunshine of a green field. To the prut of the magazine rifles was added the under-chorus of the clicking mechanism, steady and swift, as if the hand of one operator was controlling it all. It reminds one always of a loom, a great, grand steel loom, clinking, clanking, plunking, plinking, to weave a woof of thin red threads, the cloth of death. (p. 517)

Crane changed the title to emphasize his theme of the meaninglessness of war. He further expresses this theme by examining the fate of the regular soldier who performs his duty regardless of the oppressive forces of war.[13] In

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[13] In a war dispatch from Cuba to the New York World, July, 1898 (War Dispatches, pp. 187-190), Crane describes the sort of soldier found in "The Price of the Harness." In fact, he uses Nolan's name in writing "Regulars Get No Glory," the title of the dispatch.

"The three shining points about the American regular are his illimitable patience under anything which he may be called upon to endure, his superlative markmanship and his ability in action to go ahead and win without any example or leading or jawing or trumpeting whatsoever. He knows

a letter to his publisher Crane states: "The name of the story is 'The Price of the Harness' because it is the price of the harness, the price the men paid for wearing the military harness, Uncle Sam's military harness; and they paid blood, hunger and fever."[14] The harness symbolizes the job that the soldiers know they must do. There is no escaping their duty because the harness is--like the mystic tie of "The Clan of No-Name"--something that binds them to it. The price that they must pay as a result of their being tied to their duty is having to accept the inevitable presence of death.

The story concerns a group of regulars in Cuba. They are making a road out of a path so that the batteries to their rear can advance. They are doing the sort of work "which gains no encrusted medals from war" (p. 507), but which must be done nevertheless. Thus Crane opens the story showing the unheroic reality of war. These men accept the reality of their situation, which indicates that they are experienced soldiers. Although they do not have enough food and their work is tedious and hard, they react just like the

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his business, he does.

"He goes into battle as if he had been fighting every day for three hundred years. If there is heavy firing ahead he does not even ask a question about it. He doesn't even ask whether the Americans are winning or losing. He agitates himself over no extraneous points" (p. 189).

[14] R. W. Stallman, Stephen Crane: A Biography (New York, 1956), p. 420.

soldiers in "The Little Regiment." In spite of their calm acceptance of their circumstances, however, these men remain in "awe of the situation" (p. 508), which indicates that they respect war and realize their insignificance in it. They change from quiet work to chaotic battle, and the story becomes, in essence, Crane's praise of the soldier under fire.

The men's reaction to death is similar to their acceptance of life. Images of death surround them in their task: ". . . the shadows are all grim and of ghastly shape. . . . Here were scattered tiny white shelter tents, and in the darkness they were luminous like the rearing stones in a graveyard" (pp. 507-508). As they move into battle, they pass the retreating wounded men that one comes to expect in Crane's stories, ". . . the visible messengers of bloodshed, death, and the men regarded them with thoughtful awe" (p. 510). Thus they respect the power of death although they accept it without fear.

Their acceptance of death is shown by a contrast of these men with Crane's earlier protagonists. A symbolic contrast lies in the different effects that their equipment has on the characters. Where Peza seemed choked by the bandoleer that he put on in "Death and the Child," these men "presented the appearance of being clasped from behind, wrestler fashion, by a pair of thick white arms" (p. 510). As the action becomes intense, the soldiers throw off their

packs heedlessly in order to be free to fight. Peza's rifle was to him a horrible snake from a tomb. In "The Price of the Harness," however, "there was something distinctive in the way they [the regulars] carried their rifles. There was the grace of an old hunter somewhere in it, the grace of a man whose rifle has become absolutely a part of himself" (p. 510). Peza's equipment represents death to him, and he runs from it. The soldiers in this story accept their equipment as part of the war. Thus the difference in the characters' reaction to these things marks the difference in the characters themselves.

Crane's theme in "The Price of the Harness" is the meaninglessness of war, and he portrays it through the meaningless death of Private Nolan.[15] Nolan's thoughts as he readies himself to fight reflect the irony inherent in the insignificance of both himself and the battle in the war and the universe:

> Here, then, was one of those dread and lurid situations which in a nation's history stand out in crimson letters becoming tales of blood to stir generation after generation. And he was in it and unharmed. If he lived through the battle, he would be a hero of the desperate fight at-- and here he wondered for a second what fate would be pleased to bestow as a name for this battle. (p. 514)

The irony lies in the fact that he does not survive the fight and the battle becomes just another battle in the

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[15]Stallman (p. 385) states that "Nolan is No Man, the common soldier in military harness."

seemingly never-ending war.

The death of Private Nolan in combat occurs just as he is being most noble in his thoughts. He is observing his comrades and expressing feelings of humility, group loyalty, and love for his regiment. The futility of his death is brought out through the casual conversation between himself and his friends as he lies dying. There is no great drama that attends Nolan's death; he dies without even being aware of it. His elegy is "Aw, it's a damn shame" (p. 519), and he is laid in state by the placing of his hat over his face.[16]

The author ends his portrayal of the meaninglessness of war by depicting a fever tent where sick men express the price of the harness in their low-keyed, seemingly emotionless conversation. Against their talk of the death of their comrades Crane ironically counterpoints

> . . . a man over in the corner, a kind of man always found in an American crowd, a heroic, implacable comedian and patriot, of a humor that has bitterness and ferocity and love in it, and he was singing "The Star-Spangled Banner" with all the ardor which could be procured from his fever-stricken body. (p. 520)

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[16]In the same dispatch quoted earlier, "Regulars Get No Glory," Crane describes the futility of Nolan's death: "Just plain Private Nolan, blast him--he is of no consequence. He will get his name in the paper--oh, yes, when he is 'killed.' Or when he is 'wounded.' Or when he is 'missing.' If some good Spaniard shoots him through he will achieve a temporary notoriety, figuring in the lists for one brief moment in which he will appear to the casual reader mainly as part of a total, a unit in the interesting sum of men slain" (War Dispatches, p. 188).

Through the use of the fever tent as a closing scene for "The Price of the Harness" Crane symbolizes the futility of the results of man's effort in war. Crane seems to be implying that if the bullets don't get you, the fever will. Consequently, man cannot expect any reward from the universe for his efforts. However, these regulars in "The Price of the Harness" are not possessed by the futility of their position in war because they have their code of conduct to which they adhere. The dauntless voice of the singing man symbolizes the complete soldier's strength which enables him to keep going in spite of the forces against him.

The atmosphere in the fever tent is quiet; the conversation of the soldiers is sparse and low-pitched due to their weakness from fever and their weariness from battle. Crane indicates an attitude of stoic acceptance on the part of these veterans as they calmly enumerate the dead among their comrades. Although they are a ragged group, wounded and sick, the impression that they convey is somehow one of dignity. They do not rage against their situation as does the raw recruit, Henry Fleming, in his inexperience.

Crane describes another scene of calm after battle in his dispatch entitled "Stephen Crane's Vivid Story of the Battle of San Juan." In this scene the soldiers are not in a fever tent, but they are weary from battle, a battle which they have just won. Crane states:

> The army took its glory calmly. Having nothing else to do, the army sat down and looked tranquilly at

> the scenery. . . .
>
> The army was dusty, dishevelled, its hair matted to its forehead with sweat, its shirt glued to its back with the same, and indescribably dirty, thirsty, hungry, and a-weary from its bundles and its marches and its fights. It sat down on the conquered crest and felt satisfied.
>
> "Well, hell! here we are."[17]

With this anti-climactic description Crane signifies the soldier's acceptance of his position, while the closing utterance indicates the lack of heroic poses in war. The army, referred to by Crane as "it" to indicate the cohesion of the group, has fought well and performed to the best of its ability. These soldiers need no heroic orations at the end of battle. They know that they have carried out the business of war, and their satisfaction exists in their knowing. There is nothing more that needs to be said.

The ability of the soldier to carry out his duty comes from his learning a code of conduct through his experience in war. A review of Crane's characters shows how their adherence to a code supports them in their struggle in war. Henry Fleming changes from a scared youth running from the cruel forces of a naturalistic universe to a soldier who possesses the courage to carry the flag into battle. In the same way, Collins and Manolo Prat, Crane's other characters who learn to adhere to a code, are able to act courageously in the face of overwhelming odds. The

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[17] War Dispatches, pp. 179-180.

author indicates the necessity for a code of conduct by having his characters who undergo the process of learning (with the exception of Manolo, whose learning is a small part of his portrayal) survive in battle. These soldiers succeed in war only by committing themselves to the business of war and performing their duty without hope of victory and regardless of the danger of death which always hangs over them.

Perhaps Crane's most eloquent statement of the courage that it takes to perform one's duty in the face of death is found in his sketch "Marines Signaling Under Fire at Guantanamo." Crane actually saw a Sergeant Quick, a signalman, send messages from a Cuban hillside to a ship offshore. In the signalman the author found the epitome of courage. Crane states:

> I watched his face, and it was as grave and serene as that of a man writing in his own library. He was the very embodiment of tranquillity in occupation. He stood there amid the animal-like babble of the Cubans, the crack of rifles, and the whistling snarl of the bullets, and wigwagged whatever he had to wigwag without heeding anything but his business. There was not a single trace of nervousness or haste. . . . To deliberately stand up and turn your back to a battle is in itself hard work. To deliberately stand up and turn your back to a battle and hear immediate evidences of the boundless enthusiasm with which a large company of the enemy shoot at you from an adjacent thicket is, to my mind at least, a very great feat. One need not dwell upon the detail of keeping the mind carefully upon a slow spelling of an important code message.
>
> I saw Quick betray only one sign of emotion. As he swung his clumsy flag to and fro, an end of it once caught on a cactus pillar, and he looked

> sharply over his shoulder to see what had it. He gave the flag an impatient jerk. He looked annoyed.[18]

In view of Crane's concept of man in war, it is interesting that this high point in man's courage occurs when the signalman is spelling out a code.

As Edwin Cady says, to Crane "the essence of life is war."[19] In "War Memories," a long dispatch written when Crane was in Cuba, the author expresses the uncertainty of life reflected through war: "War is neither magnificent nor squalid; it is simply life, and an expression of life can always evade us. We can never tell life, one to another, although sometimes we think we can."[20] Crane's concept of man, seen through his man in war, provides that man must engage in a struggle against the forces of an uncaring universe, just as the soldier must struggle against the forces of war, without hope of reward.[21] Just as there is no certainty in war and life, so is there no security for Crane's man. This is brought out by the stories discussed in this chapter. Although the soldiers adhere to their code of conduct, "The Little Regiment" shows them

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[18] Ibid., p. 154.

[19] Stephen Crane, U.S. Author Series (New York, 1962), p. 79.

[20] War Dispatches, p. 267.

[21] Robert Schneider, "Stephen Crane: The Promethean Protest," Five Novelists of the Progressive Era (New York, 1965), p. 110.

being defeated in battle, while "The Veteran," "Virtue in War," and "The Price of the Harness" show them defeated by death. Crane's philosophy dictates that life is like war, and war is like a game; and man's only hope lies not in the result of the game but in how well he plays it. Therefore, these veterans are beaten in the end, but they have played the game according to its rules and as a result they have achieved the only goal open to man.[22] This goal is for Stephen Crane the dignity of man.[23] It is what keeps man above the other animals and gives meaning to his existence in a meaningless universe.

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[22]Robert Penn Warren's description of Hemingway's conceptual hero ("Ernest Hemingway," Selected Essays [New York, 1958], p. 86) can be applied equally as well to Crane's complete soldier: "His heroes are not squealers, welchers, compromisers, or cowards, and when they confront defeat they realize that the stance they take, the stoic endurance, the stiff upper lip mean a kind of victory. If they are to be defeated they are defeated upon their own terms; some of them have even courted their defeat; and certainly they have maintained, even in the practical defeat, an ideal of themselves--some definition of how a man should behave, formulated or unformulated--by which they have lived. They represent some notion of a code, some notion of honor, that makes a man a man, and that distinguishes him from people who merely follow their random impulses and who are, by consequence, 'messy.'"

[23]Schneider, p. 110.

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